LOOKING FOR DICK MORRIS—MATTHEW COOPER

AUGUST 21 & 28, 1995 • $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

John B. Judis on the AFL-CIO Wars • Michael Lind on Taxing the Overclass

THE Conservative CASE FOR Abortion

WHY THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT IS THE ENEMY OF FAMILY VALUES

BY JERRY MULLER

~ ~ ~

STANLEY CROUCH HATES MICHAEL JACKSON
ALFRED APPEL JR. LOVES LOUIS ARMSTRONG

~ ~ ~

OB DOLE WAS RIGHT
RIDDANCE, *NEWSDAY*

DOUGLAS COUPLAND

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IJ NWRE S00479
RON K UNZ
555 BRYANT ST #371
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

BDKBKDML ***** 5-DIGIT 94301
#943010UZ255SBY003# 537

"787445"1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

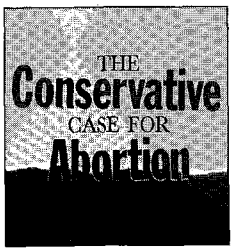
AUGUST 21 & 28, 1995

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUES 4,205 & 4,206

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
ANDREW SULLIVAN
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Executive Editor
MARGARET TALBOT
Senior Editors
MATTHEW COOPER, ANN HULBERT, JOHN B. JUDIS, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, CHARLES LANE, MICHAEL LEWIS, MICHAEL LIND, JAMES WOOD, ROBERT WRIGHT
Managing Editor
DAVID GREENBERG
Legal Affairs
JEFFREY ROSEN
Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Poetry
MARK STRAND
Dance
MINDY ALOFF
Photography
LUC SANTE
Art
JED PERL
New Republic Books (Basic Books)
PAUL GOLOB
Contributing Editors
ELIOT A. COHEN, STANLEY CROUCH, JACOB HEILBRUNN, ANNA HUSARSKA, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, VINT LAWRENCE, DOUGLAS G. McGRATH, LOUIS MENAND, ROGER ROSENBLATT, MAGGIE SCARF, ROBERT SHAPIRO, RONALD STEEL, E.V. THAW, TOM TOLES, TATYANA TOLSTAYA, MICHAEL WALZER, JACOB WEISBERG, SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, C. VANN WOODWARD
Associate Editors
PETER BEINART, NADER MOUSAVIZADEH, HANNA ROSIN, RUTH SHALIT
Design Consultant
ERIC BAKER
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Production Director
BRUCE STEINKE
Production Assistant
HENRY RIGGS
Assistant Editors
DEBRA DUROCHER, JENNIFER BRADLEY
Literary Assistant
MELANIE REHAK
Reporter-Researchers
BETH JOHNSTON, DAVID KURNICK, ELISSA SILVERMAN

President
JEFFREY L. DEARTH
Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON
Associate Publisher-Marketing
PAUL J. VIZZA
Associate Publisher-Circulation
PEGGY JARVIS FERRIN
Associate Publisher-Advertising
JAMES J. McCABE
Controller
JEAN GANDY
Advertising Director
JENNIFER BARRETT
Accounting Manager
CHRISTINA R. BONIFER
Circulation Manager
CECELIA M. STEPHENS
Advertising Assistant
CLAIRE P. STERN
Accounting Assistant
JACQUELYN M. McCULLOUGH
Circulation Assistant
CAROLYN BERRY
Back Issues and Reception
MARGO JOHNSON



Cover by Eric Baker for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 27.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Plagues and *Genesis*, class-based quotas, &c.

6 **MICHAEL LIND** TRB: SMOTHERING OAKS Time to tax the overclass's wealth.

7 **THE EDITORS** APOCALYPSE NOW Why Waco skeptics are not all paranoiacs.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Better late than never: *The Nation* and *Commentary*, &c.

10 **DOUGLAS COUPLAND** AGREE/DISAGREE: 55 statements about the culture.

11 **ALAN CRANSTON** THE NON-EVENT How no one ever decided to drop the A-bomb.

12 **ARTHUR ALLEN** BONN POSTCARD: OPERATION HADES Remember all those scare stories about nuclear material being smuggled from Russia to Germany? Phooey.

14 **CAROL FLAKE** NEW ORLEANS POSTCARD: WILD CARD Meet the woman who's running for the Louisiana governorship, on a clean-up mission. No, seriously.

16 **MATTHEW COOPER** WHITE HOUSE WATCH: THE EXPLANATION Dick Morris's gimmick.

18 **STANLEY CROUCH** HOOKED Michael Jackson, the Moby Dick of pop.

22 **JIM SLEEPER** AFTER YOU'VE GONE: NYN RIP No *Newsday* is good *Newsday*.

23 **JOHN B. JUDIS** SWEENEY AGONISTES Can anybody save the AFL-CIO? A report.

27 **JERRY Z. MULLER** THE CONSERVATIVE CASE FOR ABORTION Conservatives in favor of social cohesion should support the stable, planned families that abortion facilitates. Why the pro-life movement is actually anti-family.

30 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: MIDSUMMER ROUNDUP *Unzipped* and Hugh Grant.

31 **ALFRED APPEL JR.** POPS ART Louis Armstrong, race and the power of song.

38 **CASS R. SUNSTEIN** SELLING CHILDREN *Abandoned in the Wasteland* by Newton N. Minow and Craig L. LaMay

40 **DAVID MICAH GREENBERG** POEM *Poorer as animals talk*

42 **DENIS DONOGHUE** I AM NOT HEATHCLIFF *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* by Terry Eagleton

46 **PETER BEINART** OXFORD DIARIST: SNOB STORY

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 213, Numbers 8 & 9, Issues 4,205 and 4,206, August 21 & 28, 1995. (Printed in the U.S. on August 2, 1995.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 9 & 16, July 17 & 24, Aug. 21 & 28, and Sept. 18 & 25, 1995) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling).

© 1995 by The New Republic, Inc.

(ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Plagued

To the editors:

Is it possible that Malcolm Gladwell has a day job lobbying for the fossil fuel industry or some other multinational development corporation ("The Plague Year," July 17&24)? It is possible to knock holes in his arguments for a rosy scenario for the future using the same essential argument he uses to beat on the doom-and-gloomers: it is beyond the capacity of science to absolutely prove anything, even the existence of gravity. Science can observe and create theories based on observation but must always be ready to abandon whatever came before based upon new observations.

Armed with this knowledge and a willingness to reduce any argument to absurdity, all theories become equally valid, and lawyers can argue that cigarettes don't cause cancer, Arizona's governor can build CFC processing plants, and rainforests everywhere can be leveled and measured for tract homes without regard for any eco-wacko concerns about the consequences.

This attitude might sound breezy and goofy, but it matches in tone Gladwell's statement about "trends toward warmer weather (of all the terrifying fates!)" What gruesome irony that the double issue that printed this callous line should be on the newsstands while this year's spell of freak weather was slow-cooking scores of the poor and elderly to their deaths.

MARK BAIRD
Phoenix, Arizona

To the editors:

Malcolm Gladwell refers to God's promise to Noah to "never again destroy every living creature" as the basis for concluding the "plague was *not* an apocalypse." Gladwell's bold assertion is fallacious. If he looked just a few verses further (Genesis 9:11) he would note God's clarification that he will never again destroy all flesh *by the waters of a flood.* And, although natural apocalypse might preclude another global deluge, "pestilences" are one of several signs mentioned by Jesus (Luke 21:11) that precede "the end of the world." Moreover, "deadly plague" is at the disposal of the apocalyptic fourth horseman as recorded at Revelation 6:8.

HOWARD LIVERANCE
Oldsmar, Florida

To the editors:

"The Plague Year" touches on an evolutionary theory that the elimination of environments and species by the human population pressures micro-organisms to find new hosts—namely us. However, as an author intent on applying biology to discount the public's obsession with epidemics, Gladwell fails to fully examine some key ecological reasons why an annihilating epidemic is unlikely. His article is missing the virus's point of view. He describes a "supervirus" as "lethal as Ebola ... and so doggedly resistant to mutation that it would stay deadly." Such a vector would not be a supervirus at all, but a very self-destructive one. If there is a purpose to the viral life cycle it is to see its DNA into the next generation. The best way for a virus to accomplish that is to persist quietly and non-destructively, allowing its DNA to replicate with each cell division in the host. Mutation is a virus's greatest talent instead of a limitation. They mutate and adapt rapidly to accommodate a host, not destroy it. The relationship between virus and host is one of convolution to arrive at a draw—not a victory. In this context a supervirus is one that is infectious and adaptable yet not destructive. And that is an invader we can literally live with.

ALLISON OLSON
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Molehills

To the editors:

In "Patriot Games" (July 17&24), David Greenberg says George Bush's criticism of Michael Dukakis for opposing the pledge of allegiance in public schools was a method of drawing attention to the fact that Dukakis is a Greek-American. Greenberg is being silly. The name "Dukakis" already made it clear that the man was no WASP. The average American just sees nothing wrong with making kids say the pledge of allegiance in school and thinks that anyone who would oppose that must be the kind of left-wing nut who habitually makes mountains out of molehills.

Go see if the Italian-Americans of Canarsie think the pledge of allegiance issue was designed to insult white ethnic groups.

DOUGLAS SCZYGELSKI
Athens, Ohio

Fundamentals

To the editors:

I would like to correct your remarks on Muslim fundamentalists' killings in Pakistan (Notebook, July 17). Whatever is happening in Karachi is not a fight between the fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists. It is between the two parties, the Pakistan People's Movement and the Mohajir Quami Movement, both secular and non-religious.

ZAKIR A. SIDDIQUI
Lexington, Kentucky

Bible thumping

To the editors:

Frank Kermode's June 26 review of our book, *The Postmodern Bible* ("World of Our Father," June 26), invites response and clarification. Our main quarrel with Kermode is that his review enacts the very rhetorical move we wrote our book to critique: the claim that reading the Bible is not a theoretical enterprise, a claim he bolsters primarily by caricaturing our efforts as some unfortunate byproduct of youthful and misguided poststructuralist missionary zeal. (While we appreciate his description of us as "a group of mostly youthful scholars from various theological colleges, we must point out that most of us—regrettably enough—are not so youthful, and that we teach in a variety of primarily secular academic settings.) This rhetorical move is not surprising, as it is a simple reprise of the editorial decision made by Kermode and his coeditor, Robert Alter, in their *Literary Guide to the Bible* published several years ago. (Kermode is less than forthcoming in his review about the fact that we explicitly positioned our book against the *Literary Guide* in the introduction to our volume.) Alter and Kermode explicitly exclude from their definition of "literary" any and all approaches that are in conversation with contemporary literary theory and cultural criticism. Indeed, the list they offer on page 4 of their own introduction of what they will not discuss reads like the table of contents of our own book.

In the *Literary Guide,* no less than in the review of our work, Kermode seeks to draw an authoritative boundary around what he considers legitimate literary engagement with the biblical text and to declare everything else out of bounds. He consequently marginalizes richly textured discussions of the Bible taking place inside and outside the academy that draw on theoretical traditions as diverse as rhetorical analysis, narratology, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, feminism and womanism and materialist critique.

As we say in the introduction to our book, we do not think that one has to adopt any or all of the theoretical approaches we discuss in our volume in order to be an informed reader of the Bible. But we do think that it is disin-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

genuous not to acknowledge that every reader reads theoretically in some way or another. The degree to which such a simple acknowledgment threatens the foundations of the world that Kermode inhabits is reflected in the virulence with which he rejects and trivializes our project. Maybe we're on to something after all.

MEMBERS OF THE BIBLE AND CULTURE COLLECTIVE
Decatur, Georgia

Wide exposure

To the editors:
In "School Colors" (July 17 & 24), Akhil Amar and Neal Katyal end their argument for making "affirmative action a gentler, more benevolent force in society" with Justice Lewis Powell's dicta in *Bakke*, "The 'nation's future depends on leaders trained through wide exposure' to the ideas and mores of students as diverse as this Nation of many peoples."

Really? Is any urban dweller or someone diversity-trained to be preferred over Franklin Delano and Eleanor Roosevelt, John and Bobby Kennedy? I believe the evidence as well as the theory of democracy indicate just the opposite, i.e., that "the nation's future depends" far more on our leaders' individual character and empathy than on where they grew up or any special training. But it is on such unexamined myths or clichés that judges and professors base their opinions.

LEWIS MANILOW
Mokena, Illinois

Coasting

To the editors:
Out here L.A. Council member Laura Chick's name is well known, so its appearance in a headline tends not to be an occasion for general hilarity (Notebook, July 17 & 24).

Over the years I've also got used to the fact that TNR has few good jokes and little of interest to say about Southern California. Usually, when you take a shot at it, the effort is mistaken. That's OK—you don't have to be a national magazine.

JANE WILSON
Venice, California

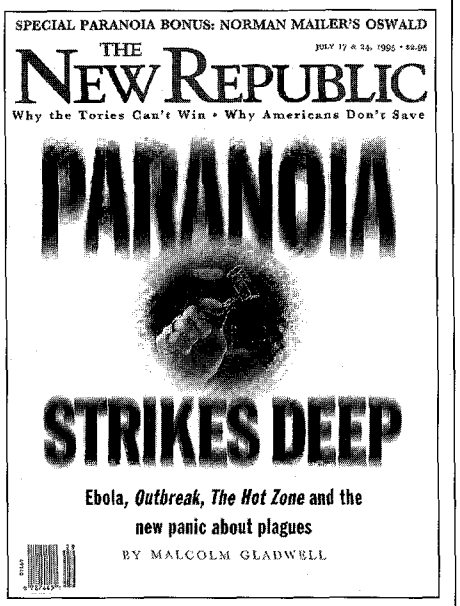
Not in denial

To the editors:
As chairman of the Cato Institute, I should probably welcome our increased visibility. The article by Thomas Geoghegan ("Why Americans Don't Save," July 17 & 24), however, includes six mentions of Cato that have no basis in fact. We are not "in denial" about the decline in real wage rates nor do we charge the seniors with "preying on the young." We do promote the privatization of Social Security but without reducing the real benefits of any current or future retiree. Maybe the editors also have some responsibility to avoid unfounded charges.

WILLIAM A. NISKANEN
Washington, D.C.

Skipping class

To the editors:
Richard D. Kahlenberg ("Equal Opportunity Critics," July 17 & 24) and other proponents of class-based substitutes for


SPECIAL PARANOIA BONUS: NORMAN MAILER'S OSWALD
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Why the Tories Can't Win • Why Americans Don't Save
PARANOIA
STRIKES DEEP
Ebola, Outbreak, The Hot Zone and the new panic about plagues
BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

race preferences commit the error of their opposites—seeking individual solutions for social divisions. Our culture now requires some gesture to address widening class differences, so we conjure up the image of the white coal miner's daughter at Harvard, as we once invoked the child of the ghetto. To preserve the image of equal opportunity, Kahlenberg gives up on solutions to help the many miners' children, who, by the way, happen to be black as well as white.

Most working-class children do not attend Harvard. If we are truly concerned with these children, not some poster child, we would facilitate their entrance to a variety of post-high-school training, which the current Congress is making more difficult. We would help a lot more people if we frankly recognized that class is alive and well in America and, for the moment, alleviate some of its consequences, rather than go through painstaking calibrations to determine who is most worthy to be our symbol of disadvantage, our euphemism for class. Such clarity could improve other areas of public policy, as well.

JUDITH STEIN
New York, New York

To the editors:
Like the Bourbons, Richard Kahlenberg has learned nothing; unlike them, he has forgotten everything. Each step in his proposal for preferential treatment for class has its analog in preferential treatment for race. After twenty-five years we have seen the results of preferential treatment for race. Kahlenberg offers neither argument nor evidence to show the same absurdities will not be produced by his proposals for class-based affirmative action.

Take two of his claims: that low income correlates well with disadvantage and is quantifiable; and that only entry-level positions in schools and employment will be brought under class-based preferences. Twenty-five years ago race correlated very well with disadvantage and though not quantifiable was largely objectively observable. What happened? Preferences were rapidly extended in one or another way to other "disadvantaged" groups: women, Hispanics, Aleuts, Inuits, Native Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Indians from the subcontinent, Vietnam-era vets and, finally, Hasidic Jews.

Now, low income is not the sole index of disadvantage. Sure as God made little green apples, disadvantage will be extended to include poor upbringing, inferior schools, low self-esteem and, in what would surely in a rational society be the final *reductio*, lack of talent.

A double standard is a double standard whether it favors the well off or disfavors them. In either case it is equally morally repugnant.

BARRY R. GROSS
Princeton, New Jersey

Heatstroke

To the editors:
Has summer fever gripped THE NEW REPUBLIC? Your last three covers have offered "America's Dirt Fixation" (July 3), "Thomas Friedman's Delusions," "America's Misplaced Obsession" (a nice two-fer in the July 10 issue), and "Paranoia Strikes Deep" along with the handy "Special Paranoia Bonus" (July 17 & 24). Perhaps you should adjust your dosage.

THOMAS RILEY
Washington, D.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

Smothering oaks

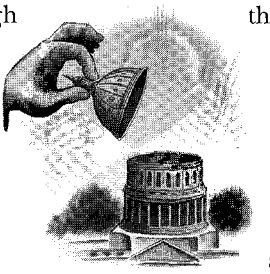
In 1871, Benjamin Disraeli told the House of Commons that inequality in Britain was grossly exaggerated: "The working classes are not paupers; on the contrary, they are a very wealthy class—they are the wealthiest in the country. Their aggregate income is certainly greater than any other class."

This year's Benjamin "Dizzy" Disraeli Award for Effrontery in Econometrics goes to Michael Novak. The neoconservative scholar recently argued in *The Wall Street Journal* that inequality of wealth in the United States is exaggerated by liberals who don't take into account "the publicly owned wealth that belongs to all Americans: the huge expanses of federal lands and forests, as well as those set aside by state and local governments; all federal, state and local buildings and monuments, research institutions and museums, roads, airports, schools, hospitals; military aircraft and naval vessels; armies and police forces." The homeless can take heart: they may not have a roof of their own, but they are the proud co-owners of Yellowstone.

I'll glide delicately over the fact that Novak's allies on the right are committed to reducing the stock of "publicly owned wealth" (with the exception of "military aircraft, naval vessels, armies") as rapidly as possible, by privatizing public lands, schools, even—the libertarian dream!—the streets. Without intending to, Novak may have started a long-deferred debate about the rising inequality of wealth in America.

Most of the debate, until now, has been about rising inequality of incomes, not unequal wealth. The figures on income inequality bear repeating. While median family incomes, adjusted for inflation, rose by about a third in the '50s and '60s, families in the middle have seen their incomes stagnate or decline since then, and the bottom has seen an absolute decline. While the rising number of single-parent families has contributed to poverty, this does not explain the fall in wages that has turned more intact families into two-earner couples (the number rose during the silent depression of the 1980s by 20 percent).

Even worse, the proportion of Americans holding two jobs to make ends meet is higher than it has been in half a century. Only the top 20 percent have gained from economic growth (the top 5 percent have enjoyed an income increase of almost a third in the past two decades). The situation is certain to grow worse if productivity gains are not shared with workers. According to the Labor Department, in the twelve-month period ending last March, even though productivity rose 2.1 percent, real wages dropped 2.3 percent.



If there is any cold comfort, it is that at least income inequality has not grown as radically as inequality of wealth. According to Edward Wolff, an economist at New York University, between 1977 and 1992 the share of wealth owned by the top 1 percent (the super rich) nearly doubled from 22 to 44 percent. The top 20 percent got "only" 76.3 percent of the growth in income during the '80s; the same one in five received an amazing 98.8 percent of the growth in wealth during Reagan's Golden Age. The concentration of wealth seems to have reached a postwar high in 1992. What is more, Wolff calculates that 54.2 percent of all bonds and 46.2 percent of all stocks are held by the top 1 percent of the U.S. population (average wealth: $2.35 million). Most of the rest is also owned by people in the top 10 percent. The proportion of the stock market held by ordinary people is actually diminishing as companies reduce pension plans for their employees. All of this, of course, is embarrassing for advocates of trickle-down economics like Michael Novak. There has hardly been a drip.

In a debate about wealth inequality, liberals and populists are in a much stronger position than conservatives. After all, it's easier to defend great disparities in income, on both moral and utilitarian grounds, than enormous variations of wealth. There are no longer any American conservatives who, in the tradition of Edmund Burke, defend a hereditary elite of rich and powerful families, "great oaks" benevolently spreading their shade over us deferent shrubs. The "conservative opportunity society" rhetoric of Newt Gingrich identifies the American dream not with being born rich (like George Bush and Pete DuPont) but with making one's own fortune (like the Republicans' favorite examples of meritocracy, Bill Gates, and ... well, Bill Gates).

Nor is this problem solved by higher social mobility in the U.S. than abroad. The United States, which has by far the most unequal distribution of the industrialized democracies, is about in the middle when it comes to Horatio Alger-style social mobility.

The real numbers trouble some supply-siders so much they play fast and loose with their data. Conservatives such as House Majority Leader Dick Armey, for example, exaggerate the degree of turnover in American society by relying on studies that treat a rich kid's movement from the college bookstore to a job in his uncle's law firm as a remarkable instance of social mobility (when this statistical illusion is factored out, it becomes clear that most Americans remain in the class to which they were born). Similarly, Novak points out that more than half of those in the top 1 percent in 1979 were no longer there in 1988. Only in America, it seems, is it so easy to move from the *ninety-ninth to the one-hundredth* percentile.

The growth of wealth inequality, then, is an even more inviting target for liberals than escalating income inequality. If a national debate on wealth inequality occurred, Americans might back a tax on the aggregate wealth of individuals (not of classes—sorry, Disraeli). While the U.S. taxes only wealth in the form of inheritance and capital gains, most other democracies tax overall wealth in addition to income. This can be done while exempting ordinary citizens from punishing taxes on necessities like owner-occupied housing.

Edward Wolff, in a new Brookings Institution study, *Top Heavy*, proposes a moderate wealth tax that would affect chiefly the super-rich—and raise an estimated $40 billion. His model is the wealth tax of a certain European country. No, not Sweden. Not the former East Germany. Nope. *Switzerland.* If conservatives want to respond by Swiss-bashing, maybe they should denounce a few other dangerous Swiss ideas: the right to bear arms, say, or federalism.

MICHAEL LIND

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

AUGUST 21 & 28, 1995

APOCALYPSE NOW

David Koresh appears to have bequeathed his fever to the discussion of his fate. As the hearings in the House of Representatives showed last week, the debate about Waco is itself taking place in the orbit of apocalypticism. It has become a debate about endings. One side warns ominously about the end of American freedom, the other side warns ominously about the end of American government. Lost in the middle, where apocalypse always dies, is the truth: the homely empirical truth about what happened in Waco, and the homely liberal truth that the malfeasance of government (who can any longer deny that the feds screwed up?) is not the same thing as the illegitimacy of government.

It was no surprise that the gun-worshiping, government-loathing right, a mottled landscape of extremism and extremism-envy that ranges from certain offices in the halls of Congress to the cabins and the computers of the militias, would seize upon the events of April 19, 1993, and sacralize them. For the anarchists of the right—and it is important to see that this is not conservatism, this is anarchism—the destruction of the Branch Davidians confirmed that the government is evil, that the finest symbol of freedom is a rifle, that America is an eschatological scene. These people do not exactly weep for Waco. They have a use for it.

And it was no surprise to discover that the Clinton administration, and the Democrats generally, also do not weep for Waco, also have a use for it. Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin made this use plain in an extraordinary statement released a few days before the hearings. Rubin insisted that the ATF adequately examined (and exonerated) itself in its report of September 1993, and then proceeded to paint the critics of the government's action at Waco as "opponents of law enforcement." "I fear some may try to use these hearings," he wrote, "to serve another agenda: to erode public support for federal firearms laws ... by undermining public confidence in the men and women who enforce those laws." And, in an astonishing sentence, Rubin instructed that "[a]lthough the subject will be Waco, the upcoming hearings cannot be understood properly outside the context of Oklahoma City."

So skepticism about the government's actions at Waco is the slippery slope to *The Turner Diaries*! In fact, Waco cannot be understood properly *except* outside the context of Oklahoma City, since the former event happened two years before the latter event; and the Clinton administration should have agreed to hearings two years ago, before Oklahoma City and the outbreak of a virulent reactionary populism. Robert Rubin and Charles Schumer and the other apologists for the Clinton administration do not see that they have something in common with the right-wing radicals whom they despise: they both treat criticism of the government as subversion of the government.

The same mistake may be found in *The New York Review of Books*, where Garry Wills pronounces that "[t]he details of the two sieges [Waco and Ruby Ridge] will be endlessly debated; but their greatest social significance lies in the way they serve to unite extremists and moderates, the left and the right, on several points of the militants' creed," such as "the unprecedented vilification of the head of our government." Unprecedented, in *our* history? Please. The vilification of presidents, and anti-federalism more generally, is, in word and in deed, an American tradition.

More to the point, there is no need to "endlessly debate" the details of Waco. Many of them have been incontrovertibly established, and they do not flatter the administration. There were no drugs at the compound. Koresh was not "stockpiling" weapons, he was trading them. The ATF never adequately understood the religious volatility with which it was dealing. Time, like force, was on the government's side. The feds had opportunities to seize Koresh when he left the compound, but they blew it. The gas they used made a surrender less likely. And so on.

Law enforcement is a noble and necessary element of government, but at Waco the Clinton administration acted coarsely and thoughtlessly and lethally, and then it refused to consider critically what it had done. (Incredibly, the attorney general told the hearings on August 1 that "I still reach the conclusion that I did then.") This is the truth, militias or no militias, Gingrich or no Gingrich. Government in America will survive its mistakes and its enemies. There is a foe of democracy greater than federalism and greater than anti-federalism, and it is the sense that an end is nigh. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Three-thousand conservatives received invitations, emblazoned with a black dragon logo, to a New Year's retreat in Miami dubbed "Dark Ages Weekend." ... A West Liberty, Kentucky, inmate convicted on adolescent sex-abuse charges convinced governors of six states to declare October 7 "Love Day." ... X-rays of Russian President Boris Yeltsin revealed that he had swallowed a swizzle stick.... A federal jury in Evansville, Indiana, convicted bank-robbers Murray Woodworth, 65, and James Bruce, 54, known as the "Over the Hill Gang." ... Eleven 911 operators working at police headquarters in New York collapsed from heat exhaustion.... Disney Chairman Michael Eisner didn't even crack a smile when Charles Gibson, co-anchor of ABC's "Good Morning America," joked on-air, "I never thought I'd work for a guy named Mickey."

SHHH...
WE WANT TO KEEP THIS A SURPRISE.
Tobacco INDUSTRY And Firearms LOBBY
Newt for President
TOLES
©1995 THE NEW REPUBLIC
I THINK THE OTHER CANDIDATES IN SIMILAR TRUCKS ALL OVER THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN MAY HAVE TIPPED HIM OFF.

EX CATHEDRA:

Pope backs equal treatment for women

Reaffirms ban against female priests

—*The Record,* of New Jersey, July 11.

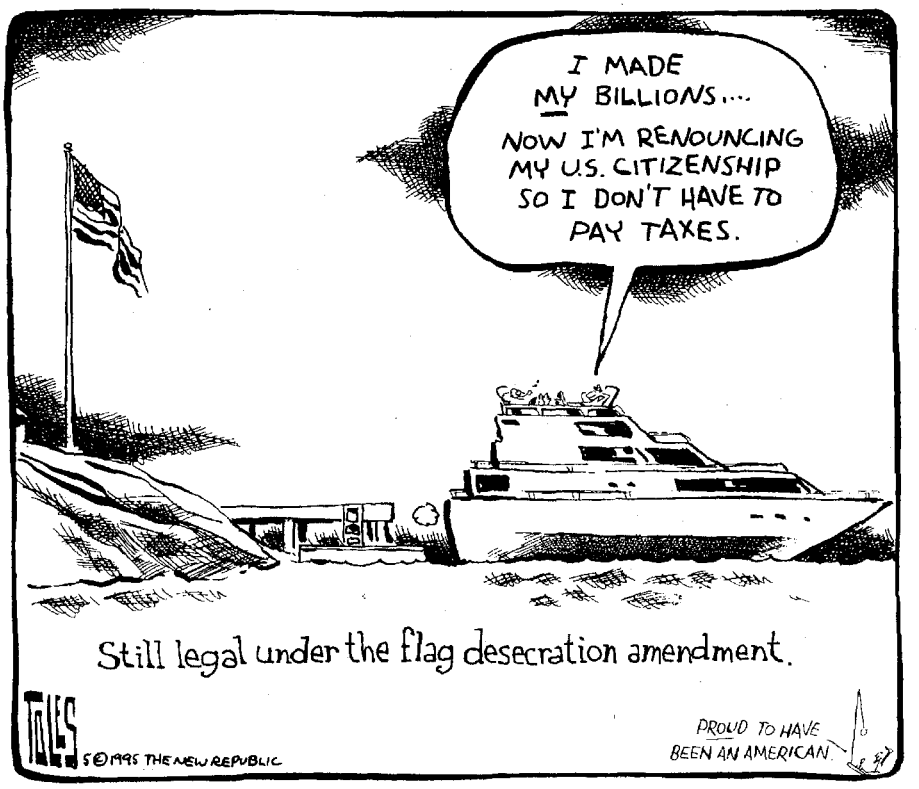
(Thanks to Keith Danish of Leonia, New Jersey.)

QUEASY: It's hard to fathom exactly what Republicans were thinking Monday night when they voted to neuter the Environmental Protection Agency. Do they really believe most Americans would feel safer knowing there are fewer limits on such tasty toxins as arsenic, radon, benzene and lead? Tom DeLay went so far as to call the EPA "the Gestapo of government agencies." Move over, Timothy McVeigh. But what makes this particularly disturbing is that it could easily have been stopped, were it not for the incompetence of the Democrats. Last Friday, Republicans lost the vote on the same amendment because GOP moderates banded with Democrats. The tally was close, so Majority Leader Dick Armey announced there would be a second vote on the same issue. You'd think Minority Leader Dick Gephardt would have made sure his troops got to the floor that day. But key Democrats were nowhere to be found. As *The Washington Post* reported, Floyd Flake had "family business" in New York, Xavier Becerra was babysitting, Fortney "Pete" Stark was at a Lamaze class and Sidney Yates was feeling "queasy." The moderate Republicans, meanwhile, all managed to show up. The result was a tie, 210-210, one infuriating vote short of passage. What happened? Gephardt, once again showing his formidable skills as leader, explained, "We're not winning many this year, in case you haven't noticed." No kidding.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER I: In the August 7 TNR, "The Venona Files," Ronald Radosh challenged *The Nation* magazine to re-evaluate its view of the Rosenberg case, given the release of new evidence. Much to our surprise, and presumably to *Nation* readers', their answer came in the August 14/21 issue, in the form of a piece written by Walter and Miriam Schneir. The Schneirs are the main authors of the most widespread conspiracy theory about the case. For years, they have argued that the Rosenbergs were framed, that the government had forged a hotel card to prove that confessed courier Harry Gold had been in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and that Rosenberg's associates in his spy ring were falsely accused victims of McCarthyism. To their credit, the Schneirs now say "the Venona intercepts are authentic" and that "Julius Rosenberg ran a spy ring composed of young fellow Communists, including friends and college classmates whom he had recruited." No *mea culpas,* however. They still say the original case against Rosenberg "relied on fabricated evidence." But they admit the American Communist Party leaders "were aware of the espionage connection," and that it "is not a pretty story." We welcome them to what TNR readers have known for years.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER II: In the August *Commentary*, Norman Podhoretz finally concedes that TNR senior editor Michael Lind has a point about Pat Robertson: "The conclusion is thus inescapable that Robertson, whether knowingly or unknowingly, has subscribed to and purveyed ideas that have an old and well-established anti-Semitic pedigree." "Prodded by Lind's article," Podhoretz still manages to conclude that "Robertson's support for Israel trumps the anti-Semitic pedigree of his ideas about the secret history of the dream of a new world order" and compares Robertson to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "even though [Robertson's] ideas about Jewish bankers derive from a lurid paranoid fantasy while Solzhenitsyn's ideas about Jewish revolutionaries are based on an uncomfortable historical reality." Solzhenitsyn, Podhoretz seems to have forgotten, is not a central part of the GOP's coalition.


I MADE MY BILLIONS....
NOW I'M RENOUNCING MY U.S. CITIZENSHIP SO I DON'T HAVE TO PAY TAXES.
Still legal under the flag desecration amendment.
TOLES
©1995 THE NEW REPUBLIC
PROUD TO HAVE BEEN AN AMERICAN

GOH AHEAD, MAKE OUR DAY: In the latest round of its war on a free press, Singapore has ordered *The International Herald Tribune* to pay libel damages of $678,000 to Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, and his son, Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. The libel? A sentence by Philip Bowring, a Hong Kong-based journalist: "Dynastic politics is evident in 'Communist' China already, as in Singapore, despite official commitments to bureaucratic meritocracy." In recent years Singapore has placed restrictions on the circulation of *Time*, *The Economist*, *The Asian Wall Street Journal* and *The Far Eastern Economic Review*. Lee Kuan Yew, the man behind the screen in Singapore's Emerald City, justifies the intimidation of Western journalists on the grounds that "journalists will not appear to be all-wise, all-powerful, omnipotent figures"—in the manner, say, of leaders of Lee's People's Action Party (for which the felicitous acronym is PAP). *The International Herald Tribune*, which is jointly owned by The New York Times Company and The Washington Post Company, has already disgraced itself by publishing an apology for Bowring's article. In caving to Lee Kuan Yew, however, the *IHT* is merely following the example of Rupert Murdoch, who obsequiously obeyed the dictatorship in Beijing when it demanded that BBC news broadcasts it considered offensive be yanked from Murdoch's satellite network, Star TV. Global reach, it seems, has its limits.

ALL ABOARD: This week we welcome a number of new faces to the magazine: Matthew Cooper, formerly White House correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report*, joins us as a senior editor and will be penning the White House Watch; James Wood, chief literary critic of *The Guardian*, whose dissection of Martin Amis appeared in these pages last week, fills in for Ann Hulbert, who is taking a year's leave on a Guggenheim Fellowship; Peter Beinart, once a reporter-researcher at TNR, becomes an associate editor; Jacob Heilbrunn, whose piercing foreign policy profiles and essays have appeared regularly in these pages, joins us as a contributing editor; and we say a grateful, fond goodbye to Weston Kosova, who goes to work as a Washington correspondent at *Newsweek*. A reminder: this is a double issue, and we won't be publishing next week. The editors will spend their time off adjusting their name-tags.

THE OBVIOUS AND THE INTRIGUING:

Climate runs hot, cold, research says

—*Columbus Dispatch*, July 7.

Man shoots neighbor with machete

—*The Miami Herald*, July 3.

(Thanks to Robert Simon of Columbus, Ohio, and Dan McFaddin of Miramar, Florida.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AGREE/DISAGREE: 55 STATEMENTS ABOUT THE CULTURE

001. Abundance renders all issues personal and apolitical.
002. All inflection of individualism has been codified.
003. Art about art is over.
004. Art-for-art's-sake remains valid.
005. As elites dwindle into pointless cliques, they cease constituting a boutique audience.
006. Borders are interesting because they generate difference and hence newness.
007. Bourgeois torpor is infinitely superior to living in an ant colony.
008. Commodity fetishism is a recognizably biological impulse.
009. Consensual hierarchy is not necessarily oxymoronic.
010. Consumeristic cultures being forced to share intellectual hegemony with less consumeristic cultures is not going to be a graceful process.
011. Desire seems to have boiled down to shopping.
012. Demonize the symbolic analysts.
013. Detachment is now a sentimental viewpoint.
014. Elites are too preoccupied with bunkering to waste time coddling avant-gardes.
015. Even the most individual statements, if copied enough, become assembly-line.
016. Ideologies are often adopted as poses by people who wish to avoid engaging in discourses they find tiresome.
017. If it feels exclusive, it's probably doomed.
018. If we can tell it's yours, it will be taken away.
019. If you possess a recognizable style, then good for you.
020. If you wish to both steal it and vandalize it, it may well be art.
021. If your authorship is detectable, you must conceal the tingle of pleasure you feel upon recognition.
022. If your creation is recognizably yours, you must be punished.
023. In the future everybody will be the same.
024. Individualism exhausts most people.
025. Individuals will not assign themselves social responsibility in the absence of perceived social cohesion.
026. Leisure time is a joke.
027. Linear time feels both laughable and terrifying.
028. Making art while having an audience inside your head is corrupt.
029. Making statements purely about society indicates a lack of individual character.
030. Media manipulation seems dated.
031. Money still dictates the taxonomy of newness.
032. New York is too preoccupied with other issues to generate avant-gardes.
033. One feels pity for cultures unwilling to subsidize difficult ideas.
034. One sentimentalizes liberalism yet also recognizes its obsolete dimensions.
035. Only art that speaks to everybody counts.
036. Other people are irrelevant.
037. Other people are the only possible future.
038. Paint is a joke.
039. Personal memory and corporate memory are so blurred together that individualism has become a shaky concept.
040. Place is a joke.
041. Pre-empting criticism through the clever use of strategy is boring.
042. Relief from anxiety in exchange for individual identity is a bad trade.
043. Security guards are the only modern component of modern art museums.
044. Secretly yearning for a big new movement is laughably naïve.
045. Serial innovation by an individual human is the only respectable dimension of creation.
046. Sexual art is often merely therapy.
047. Skill is sentimental.
048. Technology got us into this; technology will get us out.
049. The middle classes are an historically transitory tribe necessary only for the studious creation of new technologies and will soon be obsolete.
050. Victimology proved unable to generate objects of commodity value.
051. You mistake the effects of social disengagement for dwindling abundance.
052. You mistake the effects of dwindling abundance for social disengagement.
053. You never hear the word "ego" used anymore.
054. Your longing for an end of history reveals your anger at having to be an individual.
055. Your own awareness of your own complicity in the commodification process is no longer of any concern.

DOUGLAS COUPLAND's latest book is *Microserfs* (HarperCollins).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dropping the A-bomb.

THE NON-EVENT

By Alan Cranston

Hiroshima's fiftieth anniversary has set loose a torrent of magazine covers, TV specials and newspaper pull-out sections re-examining the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan. Many have dwelled upon the morality, strategic necessity and wisdom of the decision. But, whatever the merits of those arguments, it is a simple but startling historical fact, still virtually unknown even after a half a century, that there was never any "decision," as such. The Truman administration simply assumed that the bomb would be used as soon as it became available. The president and his advisers discussed where, when and how to drop it, but the profound moral and ethical implications of this monstrous new weapon, which bedevil scholars and statesmen to this day, escaped scrutiny.

Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had agreed in a secret memorandum on September 18, 1944, that "when a 'bomb' is finally available it might perhaps, after mature deliberation, be used against the Japanese...." But no "mature deliberation" occurred. On September 22 Roosevelt asked Vannevar Bush, head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, whether he thought the bomb should be used against Japan or employed only as a threat. No decision was made, and they agreed to table the issue temporarily. By the time we got the bomb, FDR was dead, and the memorandum, having been misfiled in the White House, was not available to Harry Truman. Truman's role, according to General Leslie R. Groves, the head of the Manhattan Project, was "one of non-interference—basically a decision not to interfere with existing plans." David McCullough's *Truman* quotes Churchill on "the decision that was not a decision."

When some of the scientists behind the Manhattan Project tried to tell Truman they thought dropping the bomb was immoral and would set off a dangerous nuclear arms race, they were shunted off to former senator and future Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, who gave their views short shrift in his own advice to Truman. The closest Truman's top officials and advisers ever came to questioning the bomb's use was the consideration given to publicly demonstrating its capacity as a warning to Japan. Yet even this brief discussion focused on the pros and cons—mostly cons—of a demonstration; it did not fundamentally question the bombing of Japan itself.

Military planning advanced unquestioned, with cold precision, in the highest secrecy. The U.S. Air Force began to practice dropping atomic bombs in the late summer of 1944. A Target Committee was established in 1945 to consider what to bomb in Japan. Truman later said, "Let there be no mistake about it. I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used."

Years of war had dulled moral sensitivities toward civilian slaughter, allowing policymakers to view the terrible new weapon in purely military terms. Back in 1939, before the U.S. entered the war, Roosevelt had urged both sides to avoid the "barbarism" of civilian bombings. But the Nazi Luftwaffe and the British Royal Air Force were soon engaged in bloody tit-for-tat bombings of London, Berlin and other cities, and by early 1945 the U.S. Air Force was itself participating in incendiary assaults on Dresden and Tokyo. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was seen as a logical next step rather than a leap into a new realm. Sparing innocents was a principle long since abandoned.

Truman recollected in later years that he made "the" decision to use the bomb on his way home from the Potsdam conference after Japan had rejected the Allies' demand for "unconditional surrender." He claimed to remember calling a high-level meeting at Potsdam with Byrnes, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, Admiral William Leahy, Generals George C. Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower, Navy Secretary James C. Forrestal "and some others to discuss what should be done with this awful weapon." But, in archival records and other resources, historians have been unable to find any evidence that such a "meeting" ever took place.

On August 6 and 9, 1945, it was as if portions of the sun suddenly plummeted down on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The world, which had known nothing of the weapon, was stunned by the instant obliteration of tens of thousands of human beings. Most Americans were jubilant, convinced that with the long war over, the lives of American troops in the Pacific would be spared. Japan did surrender a few days after Hiroshima. It will never be known whether an alternative policy could have ended the war, for none was ever considered. About this time I met Albert Einstein, who warned me, as he did others, that all-out use of nuclear weapons might extinguish all life on Earth. Truman, who stoutly defended use of the bomb to the end of his days, was nevertheless aghast at the sheer and previously unimaginable human suffering and physical devastation it wrought.

The nuclear chain of events had assumed a life of its own that dwarfed the processes that gave it birth. In Stimson's words, it forever changed "the relationship of man to the universe"—without a "decision" to do so ever having been made. All of this leads to a question for today's world: How confident are we about the processes designed to deal with the nuclear dilemmas that will arise slowly, or more likely suddenly, in the days and decades to come?

ALAN CRANSTON represented California in the Senate from 1969 until 1993.

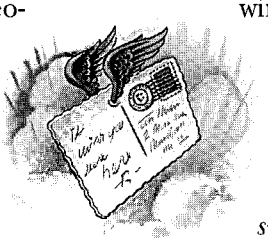
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BONN POSTCARD

OPERATION HADES

By Arthur Allen

Of all the unforeseen consequences of the Soviet Union's collapse, perhaps none is more frightening than the black-market trade in nuclear material. Spurred by lax security, desperate economic straits and the growth of organized crime in the former Soviet Union, the smuggling of radioactive stuff has become the world's problem, and Germany's problem in particular. Since 1991, German officials have seized rogue radioactive substances sixty times—more than their counterparts in any other country—and in more lethal form each time. In the most spectacular case to date, federal police last August discovered 363 grams of Plutonium-239 in the briefcase of a passenger disembarking from a Lufthansa jet that had just arrived at the Munich airport from Moscow—an amount that in the event of a crash could theoretically have turned all of Munich's beer gardens into ghostly Jonestowns. The case, a disturbing reminder of the porousness of Russia's nuclear security, provoked a flurry of demarches from the White House on down demanding that Boris Yeltsin help control his nuclear stockpiles.



As it turns out, though, the German government, through its intelligence services, has been stimulating the trade from Russia that it is ostensibly trying to suppress. In fact, the nuclear black market in Germany consists not so much of nuclear renegade states as of German police engaged in elaborate sting operations. The federal intelligence service—the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND)—acknowledged as much in a report leaked in June. It states, "There is no evidence to support the frequently made claim that certain Third World countries are seeking to buy fissile material on the nuclear black market." Where certain Third World countries fear to tread, however, German police agencies have rushed to do their part.

Consider a transaction that took place last summer at the Bremen train station. At first, the Bremen prosecutors announced that they had caught a German frontman for the Russian mafia delivering a sample of weapons-grade plutonium to a buyer representing a Third World country. Later, however, officials admitted that the "Third World" buyer was actually a Hamburg journalist working in cooperation with the Bremen police; the *Mafiya* seller was a former federal narcotics agent; and the sample was the nuclear smuggler's equivalent of baby laxative—0.05 micrograms of Plutonium-239 contained in an East German smoke detector of which there are hundreds in circulation.

In the higher-profile Munich case, known as Operation Hades, parliament has appointed a panel to investigate charges that overzealous BND informants lured a Colombian and two Spanish Basques into smuggling plutonium. The panel has not yet completed its inquiry and, in the meantime, the German press has been feverishly speculating about motivations for the operation. Was it spurred by German fear and loathing of Moscow? After all, the BND had been built by the CIA from the ruins of the Gestapo's counterintelligence explicitly to target cold war Russia, and many of its operatives remain instinctively hostile to Russia. Was it an elaborate government-hatched scheme for securing Yeltsin's cooperation on nuclear security or even for buffing up Helmut Kohl's image during a campaign?

Questions about Operation Hades inevitably lead back to the Bonn office of the flamboyant Bernd Schmidbauer, one of Kohl's two ministers without portfolio. Three years ago, Kohl plucked the former chemistry teacher from an obscure environment ministry post to coordinate intelligence matters for him. A tall, garrulous man with bad teeth that make him look predatory, Schmidbauer's fondness for high-stakes stunts has earned him the nickname "008." In June 1992, for example, he turned up in Beirut, safari jacket, wind-tousled hair and all, to personally retrieve two German hostages. He hadn't bothered to inform the foreign ministry of his plans. In the summer of 1993, to the bafflement of practically everyone, Schmidbauer invited the chief of the Iranian Secret Service to tour the Cologne headquarters of the *Verfassungsschutz*, the German equivalent of the FBI, even calling reporters in afterwards to publicize the visit. Schmidbauer implied that it was part of a secret plan to win the release of a German agent sentenced to death by Iran, but British and U.S. officials were enraged. The affair was vintage Schmidbauer—provocative, off-the-shelf and self-serving.

In handling the nuclear smuggling case, Schmidbauer, who plays the role of Kohl's wild-man alter ego, almost certainly had its dramatic publicity value in mind. When it came to explaining the case, he struck a note of alarm, turning up on television every couple of hours after the conclusion of Operation Hades to announce that the government had stopped a dangerous Russian smuggling ring. Ten days after arrests were made in the case, he got himself and a passel of German spymasters and nuclear physicists invited to Moscow. There, according to one of the physicists, he proceeded to dress down Sergei Stepashin, then head of the reformed Russian KGB, in front of Stepashin's aides. Schmidbauer, who had been in a position to notify Russian police that nuclear material was about to be flown out of Moscow into Germany, didn't tell his Russian counterparts about the case until it was over. He later suggested that senior Russian officials may have been involved.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now enjoy brilliant college lectures in your home or car with audio and video recordings by *SuperStar Teachers*® - professors most admired by America's students.

The Teaching Company is searching America's leading colleges and universities for SuperStar Teachers® - professors whose lecture courses are rated highest by the students themselves in independent course evaluation guidebooks - and recording their lectures for a wider audience.

Top-rated professors thus identified are being brought to Washington, DC, where their famous lecture courses are delivered before rapt audiences and recorded in audio and video for the enjoyment of present and future generations everywhere.

Each taped lecture series is a condensed eight-lecture version of the professor's one-semester course in the subject.

Audience reactions at the taping sessions have been ecstatic. Written evaluations included comments like, "I didn't want it to end!" and "Had me on the edge of my seat!"

Here are some of the many courses now available for enjoyment in your living room or car, while exercising, commuting, or just taking the time to learn more about yourself and the world around you. For our catalog of over 60 courses, call **1-800-TEACH-12**.

The Old Testament: An Introduction

Robert Oden, Ph.D., President, Kenyon College. Whether treated as theology, literature or history, the Old Testament has influenced the life of virtually every Westerner, no matter what their faith. Dr. Oden skillfully guides you through biblical history from the Garden of Eden to the Exile to the mystery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.
Course No. 333. Audio or Video.

The New Testament: An Introduction

Elizabeth McNamer, Ph.D., Rocky Mountain College. This remarkably accessible course offers an extraordinary opportunity to understand the historical and social forces of theology. You'll learn about the world in which Jesus lived and preached, of Paul and his journeys, and the writings of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. Dr. McNamer's exhilarating lectures are just as gripping for those whose interest is intellectual as for those for whom it is a subject of faith.
Course No. 316. Audio or Video.

Philosophy and Human Values.

Rick Roderick, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, National University. A radical critique by a challenging lecturer. Explore the human condition through the works and lives of Socrates, Augustine, Kant, Hegel, Mill, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. "*It will change your life.*" - Duke Univ. Teacher/ Course Evaluation Book.
Course No. 469. Audio or Video.

Cosmic Questions: Astronomy from Quark to Quasar.

Robert P. Kirshner, Ph.D., Professor of Astronomy, Chairman of the Astronomy Department, Harvard University. At the cutting edge of current exploration of the origins, age and future of the universe, Dr. Kirshner's lectures take you on a mind-altering journey from the subatomic to the cosmic in search of modern answers to some of our most ancient questions.
Course No. 145. Audio or Video.

To order, mail coupon below or call

1-800-TEACH-12

(1-800-832-2412)

please refer to Offer Code 705

or FAX 703-912-7756

Economics: An Introduction

Timothy Taylor, University of Minnesota. The goal of this course is to make you economically literate — to make you able to absorb, understand and accept or reject the arguments of economists and others who use economic arguments. We should all possess this kind of literacy because the concerns of economists are central to our lives. What should we make? Who should make it? Who should get what we make? How do economists think about these questions?
Part I, *Microeconomics*, Course No. 521. Audio or Video
Part II, *Macroeconomics*, Course No. 522. Audio or Video
Special Price! Both Parts, Course No 523. Audio $129.95 Video $199.95 (+$10 s&h)

A Modern Look at Ancient Greek Civilization.

Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, Ph.D., Professor of Classics, Wesleyan University. An encompassing view of the art, history, and literature of the astonishing ancient civilization that has had such a profound effect on the development of the entire Western world. Student consensus in campus courses guidebook: "*Superlatives, superlatives, superlatives!*"
Part I, Course No. 841. Audio or Video
Part II, Course No. 842. Audio or Video
Special Price! Both Parts, Course No. 843. Audio $129.95 Video $199.95 (+$10 s&h)

Power Over People: Classic and Modern Political Theory.

Dennis Dalton, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science, Barnard College/Columbia University. The impact on the world of Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Marx, Freud, Hitler, Gandhi. The Columbia-Barnard Course Guide said about Professor Dalton's lectures: "*It's a good idea to arrive one-half hour early to get a seat. We're not joking.*"
Course No. 448. Audio or Video.

The History of Hitler's Empire

Dr. Thomas Childers, Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania. If it happened in Germany, could it happen elsewhere, could it happen here? This course begins with two questions that pose and hold their moral tension for eight lectures: Would you have had the foresight to see what was happening in Germany at the time, and, if you did, would you have had the courage to act?
Course No. 805. Audio or Video.

The Origin of the Modern Mind.

Alan Charles Kors, Ph.D., Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania. Foundations laid by great 17th Century thinkers: Bacon, Locke, Descartes, Newton, and Pascal. "*Makes history come alive!*" - student evaluation guidebook.
Course No. 453. Audio or Video.

God and Mankind: Comparative Religions.

Robert Oden, Ph.D., President, Kenyon College; formerly Professor and Chair, Department of Religion, Dartmouth College. When Dr. Oden taught this subject at Dartmouth, his course was invariably held at 8 am in the dead of the New Hampshire winter - and was always full!
Course No. 616. Audio or Video.

Comedy, Tragedy, History: The Live Drama and Vital Truth of William Shakespeare.

Peter Saccio, Ph.D., Willard Professor of Drama and Oratory, Dartmouth College. An accomplished actor as well as teacher, Dr. Saccio has the rare ability to act out Shakespeare's lines with power and authority, and then to probe beneath the dazzling brilliance for meanings hidden to us by three centuries of changes in language and customs.
Course No. 263. Audio or Video.

Is Anyone Really Normal? Perspectives on Abnormal Psychology.

Drew Westen, Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; recipient of University of Michigan's Golden Apple Teaching Award. In these fast-paced lectures, Dr. Westen explains, contrasts and integrates the contributions of Freudian analysis and cognitive/behavioral psychology in light of their most rigorous test: explaining and healing mental disorders.
Course No. 658. Audio or Video.

Look for our products soon at a store near you.

The Teaching Company® - Dept. 705
7405 Alban Station Ct., Suite A107,
Springfield, VA 22150

Please send me the following SuperStar Teachers College Lecture Course(s), each consisting of eight 45-minute lectures on audio or video cassettes in handsome storage cases:

VIDEO PRICES: One course, $149.95. Two courses, $129.95 each. Three or more courses, $109.95 each.

AUDIO PRICES: One course, $89.95. Two courses, $79.95 each. Three or more courses, $69.95 each.

course #	audio/video	price
$5 per course, shipping & handling		
Sales tax, if in VA, 4.5%		
TOTAL		

❑ Check enclosed:
(to The Teaching Company®)

❑ Charge to my:
❑ VISA ❑ MasterCard ❑ AMEX ❑ Discover

Card No. Exp.

Signature

Name (Please Print)

Phone

Mailing Address

City & State Zip

❑ Check here if you're not ordering now but would like a copy of our FREE catalog with additional information on these and over 45 other courses.

OUR "NO-RISK" GUARANTEE:
★ You may return any course unopened within 10 days for a full refund or charge card credit.
★ If you have played part or all of any course and you are not fully satisfied, simply write us a short note explaining why you are disappointed, return the tapes, and we will promptly issue a full refund or charge card credit.
(Shipping not included)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

After the magazine *Der Spiegel* ran a report claiming that the whole smuggling case had been the work of BND agents provocateurs, Schmidbauer vowed, "I'll put my job on the line to swear that no agents of the federal government played any role in encouraging this material be brought into Germany." "Rubbish," says Peter Struck, formerly the leading Social Democrat on the intelligence oversight committee. After hearing Munich Judge Heinz Alert describe the government's handling of the case as "scurrilous," "dangerous" and "barely permissible," the new plutonium panel is lusting for blood. Alert left open the possibility that government agents might also be tried for their roles in the case.

Though the full picture is still murky, the trial has given Germans a glimpse of how Operation Hades worked. It was clear to anyone in the courtroom that the three defendants, all clutching their prison belongings in plastic bags, were a small-time and easily manipulated lot. The lead defendant, a 38-year-old Colombian named Justitiano Torres Benitez, was a waiter in a provincial town who back in the late '70s won a scholarship to study medicine in Krasnodar, Russia. When the Soviet Union crumbled, he quit medicine and went into the (legal) arms business. Torres was the connection to the plutonium source in Russia, and it was he who was slapped into handcuffs as he stepped off Lufthansa Flight 3369 from Moscow with a briefcase containing the poorly shielded, 87.7 percent-pure Plutonium-239. None of the three defendants had a criminal record or was on any watch list before the arrests. But all three were short of cash when they were approached in Madrid by a German "businessman," actually BND agent Karsten Schnell, who reportedly said he was in contact with a government that had a large budget for a nuclear bomb.

In the account Schnell gave to protocol, the ringleader representing the Russians was a mysterious "Juan" who stated that the plutonium was stored in Berlin. It is typical of the yarns Schnell spun around his enthralled handlers that "Juan" turned out to be a small-time Basque hustler named Manolo Lopez who made his living driving a cement truck. An unindicted middleman in the business, he was hardly a mastermind of nuclear terrorism. German police are forbidden from permitting illegal radioactive substances into Germany, however, so Schnell's claim that the stuff was in Berlin gave them the pretext they needed to continue the operation.

Torres was worried about the safety of flying into Munich with the plutonium. But the undercover men he thought were his partners refused to make the buy in Russia. As for the safety of the passengers, "I couldn't give a shit," BND agent Rafael Ferrera Fernandez is quoted as saying on a bugging transcript.

For many Germans, that's the nub of the problem: if the German officials knew that plutonium was being flown in over a populous area, how could they not have stopped it? A group that represents airplane crews and an organization called International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War have sued the BND, the federal and Bavarian police and Schmidbauer, claiming that the authorities knowingly endangered passengers, as well as the population of Munich, by allowing the material to be flown into the city aboard a plane that could have crashed, vaporizing the plutonium into inhalable, deadly motes.

There are some, such as Frank von Hippel, a Princeton University nuclear physicist working in the White House Office of Science and Technology when Operation Hades broke, who argue that however serious such legal and ethical doubts about the German government's involvement in the case, some good did come out of it. The case focused attention on the leakiness of Russia's nuclear labs, von Hippel contends, and led the Russian government to cooperate more closely with the West on nuclear security.

But the strain put on German-Russian relations by the case—and particularly by Schmidbauer's blustering about it—may limit that cooperation. While Russia's intelligence services are said to be worried by nuclear smuggling, the bust stirred ill will toward Germany in the largely autonomous and nationalistic Atomic Energy Ministry, which is in charge of about thirty tons of plutonium. Ministry officials continue to deny that Torres's plutonium came from a Russian installation and complain that Germany has yet to send a promised sample so that they can trace its origins. "The affair is damaging Russian-German relations," said Gernot Erler, the head of the German parliament's disarmament subcommittee, after a trip to Moscow in July. More important, questions remain about the extent to which the German government has helped create a demand for nuclear material smuggled out of Russia. As Torres's lawyer put it, "An undercover action that creates a market is converting an abstract threat to the law into a concrete danger for the population."

ARTHUR ALLEN is a journalist based in Bonn, Germany.

NEW ORLEANS POSTCARD

WILD CARD

By Carol Flake

In Louisiana, where the penitential season of Lent follows the excesses of Mardi Gras, voters like to repent periodically of their penchant for populist rogues by electing a reformer to clean things up. This year, Edwin Edwards, the glib four-term governor best known for gambling debts and indictments, has stepped aside, and would-be reformers have been lining up for the gubernatorial primary in October. The field is as crowded with contenders and longshots as a Kentucky Derby with no obvious favorite. No one is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ready yet to declare a frontrunner.

So far, the most credible of the reform candidates is Democratic state Treasurer Mary Landrieu, daughter of former New Orleans Mayor Moon Landrieu, who has inherited her father's reputation for almost-bullheaded candor and courage. To the surprise of many, she has been running a steady second in the polls to former Governor Charles E. "Buddy" Roemer, a convert to the GOP who lost out in the last primary to Edwards and former Klan leader David Duke. (Duke has been successfully neutralized in this race by other conservatives.) Other polls show that Landrieu would defeat Roemer in a runoff.

A small, blond-haired woman whose sweet-faced prettiness is tempered by a firm handshake and a no-nonsense manner, Landrieu has made political corruption her main target. During the first week of May, she traveled across the state, formally announcing her candidacy for governor with an ironic variation on the famous "Evangeline" speech that Huey Long delivered in Acadiana; she reminded voters that they, like Longfellow's heroine, had been abandoned. "Seventy years ago," said Landrieu, "the people of Louisiana waited for honest and effective government, and we are still waiting today."

Landrieu, who was educated by nuns at the Ursuline Academy in New Orleans, radiates a kind of level-headed determination; in a state that may finally have grown weary of electing colorful scoundrels, this quality resonates. The question for many, though, is whether she might be too much of a goody-two-shoes to negotiate the swampy lowlands of Louisiana politics, where folksiness and fallibility go a long way. "She doesn't know how to compromise," sniffed a master deal-maker in the state legislature. "Mary's too normal," said a New Orleans voter. "She needs something a little shady in her past—maybe an illegitimate multiracial child."

In New Orleans, for her official announcement on May 4, Landrieu's family—her parents; her husband, Frank Snellings; her 3-year-old son, Connor; all eight of her siblings; and most of her twenty-three nieces and nephews—gathered around her under a gazebo near the Mississippi River. It was an almost blindingly wholesome sight, with little girls in matching dresses trying not to giggle as balloons strained at their tethers. On a front row of folding seats sat a group of elderly black New Orleanians, veterans of Moon Landrieu's crusade to integrate city government. Attractive young men and women from a Landrieu pep group called the Pelican Alliance mingled with the crowd, a far cry from the red-faced cronies and toupée-sporting operatives you usually see around Louisiana's gubernatorial candidates.

Landrieu noted that the state was now last on most of the nation's livability lists but first on its lists of crime and illiteracy. "Gambling," she said pointedly, "is not the future of our state; education is."

Three nights before, by contrast, Harrah's had opened the city's first land-based casino in the old Municipal Auditorium on the edge of the French Quarter. Green laser beams pierced the sky all night, and giant joker-head balloons flew above the venerable building where the city's Mardi Gras clubs once held their balls. Edwards was a guest of honor. Just a month later, two of the city's gambling boats had closed, and the new casino had fallen short—by a third—of optimistic revenue predictions. Most of the patrons, as it turned out, were not jet-setting high rollers but low-income locals.

According to some pollsters, this morning-after feeling could work in Landrieu's favor. "All our polling data shows that women are viewed as more honest," says Bernie Pinsonat, a Baton Rouge pollster. "Women are not seen as part of the good ol' boy network, which is viewed as the problem." Though one of her rivals is also a woman, lieutenant governor and grocery-heiress-by-marriage Melinda Schwegmann, Landrieu has drawn support from a number of women's organizations including an influential New Orleans group called the Committee of 21. And, although Landrieu is a Democrat with a strong record of supporting organized labor, she is often likened to New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman, who also combines fiscal conservativism and a pro-choice stance.

But the candidate to beat is still Buddy Roemer. A Harvard graduate and brilliant campaigner, Roemer ran for governor against Edwards as a reformer in 1987 and won, even though his father had been Edwards's commissioner of administration and was convicted of racketeering, along with Mafia boss Carlos Marcello. (Roemer Sr.'s conviction was later overturned on appeal.) Though Roemer's motto, "I love Louisiana, but I hate Louisiana politics," became the soundbite of the year, many of his attempts to rehaul state government, particularly his push for fiscal reform, ran out of steam. By the end of his term, he had retreated in Hamlet-like solitude to the governor's mansion, where he developed the habit of constantly snapping a rubber band around his wrist to keep away negative thoughts.

This time around, Roemer has been reborn as an ultraconservative populist, brandishing a Contract with Louisiana that echoes the Contract with America. He announced his candidacy at the gates of a New Orleans jail and warns that crime has transformed New Orleans from the "Crescent City" into "Cape Fear." He has also embraced some of David Duke's issues, including draconian welfare reform and a return to chain gangs.

Meanwhile, the other gubernatorial prospects are trying their best to make the campaign a God-guns-and-guts free-for-all. During a debate before a crime-fighting group, the Reverend Cary Kimbrough, a candidate from Baton Rouge, said he believed "the people of Louisiana should be armed." Earlier that day, Kimbrough had declined to rule out nuclear weapons as a citizen's prerogative. State Senator Mike Foster, whose campaign bumper stickers feature the silhouette of a rifle, boasts that he's the "point man in the Senate for the NRA." Even Representative Bill Jefferson, an African American candidate from New Orleans, has joined the fray with a charming ad in which his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

father discusses rabbit hunting.

No candidate, however, can outgun Harry Lee, the rotund Chinese-American sheriff of Jefferson Parish, who won national notoriety a few years ago for ordering his deputies to stop all suspicious-looking black citizens who entered Jefferson Parish. When Lee ruled as maharaja of the Mardi Gras club Alla in 1992, he weighed in at 325 pounds and had to be lifted onto the parade float with a power-company cherry picker. Asked why he decided to run for governor, Lee, a master of the non sequitur, responded, "I like to hunt and fish."

"Louisiana culture," says Lee's press secretary, "is always going to produce somebody that causes the rest of the nation to stand up and say, 'You can't be serious.'" Landrieu is hoping to end all that. And there would be a certain poetic justice if she, a graduate of the Ursuline Academy, became the first female governor of Louisiana and managed to earn the nation's respect for her state. As Landrieu told supporters recently, "The Ursuline nuns were sent here in 1727 to help civilize Louisiana. And it's still a work in progress."

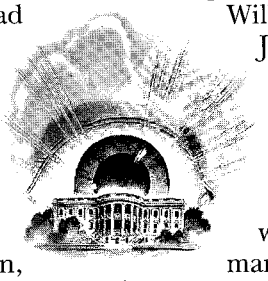
CAROL FLAKE is the author of *New Orleans: Behind the Mask of America's Most Exotic City.*

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

THE EXPLANATION

By Matthew Cooper

Is Leon Panetta turning into Al Haig? Hardly. But the White House chief of staff is fighting to prove that he's, to use the retired general's infamous phrase, "in control." Panetta went to Bill Clinton recently to insist that political strategist Dick Morris be brought into some kind of staff structure, instead of allowed to steer policy from afar. Clinton agreed, and Morris didn't fight it. To seal the deal, Panetta's people issued a memo announcing that meetings with Morris would be made through the chief of staff's office.



Morris has had his wrist slapped on foreign policy, too. In May, when Morris tapped out a presidential radio address on Japan, National Security Adviser Tony Lake protested. Too strident, Lake argued after the statement was faxed to Clinton aboard Air Force One on his return from Ukraine. The speech never ran. Another Morris dip into foreign policy failed, too. A presidential statement on terrorism that Morris crafted was deemed too coarse, promising more retribution than could be delivered.

Despite this inevitable curtailment of his power, Morris *is* the Svengali that he's been dubbed in recent weeks. While he works out of his Connecticut home, he's in Washington four days most weeks. Morris, of course, was the guy who helped persuade Clinton to embrace a balanced budget. And back on Memorial Day, when Al Gore was going to give a speech on the environment, Morris got Clinton himself to issue the attack—the better to score points as Americans headed to the beach. The president's centrist pleas on issues such as school prayer (silence is OK) are the articulation of Morris's idea of "triangulation"—which is not a chapter heading from *The Joy of Sex* but a strategy of repudiating Democrats and Republicans alike so that the president stands equidistant from the parties like a triangle's peak. Call it flattery—or sucking up—but White House aides now un-self-consciously mimic Morris's habit of explaining triangulation with his hands.

How did Morris get to be so big? Much has been made of Clinton and Morris's shared history. Born just a year apart, they've spent eighteen years in each other's orbit. Morris helped Clinton win the Arkansas governorship in 1978 and regain it in 1982. They rarely lost touch. But his power stems from more than nostalgia. It comes in part from his brassy, Carvillian style. Morris is not a centrist like David Gergen. Gergen's moderation was about accommodation and civility; it was a repudiation of much of what he saw and embraced during his youth under Richard Nixon. Gergen, a courtly North Carolinian, came to Clinton from a world of Aspen Institute symposia and reasoned pronouncements on "The MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour." Morris is a New Yorker, a ward heeler. In the words of Doug Schoen, one of the new White House pollsters, as a Manhattan activist in the '60s, Morris "could tell you why 72nd Street voted one way and Central Park South another." In recent weeks, as White House aides worked out a series of speeches touting a theme of "common ground"—read: bipartisanship—Morris, contrary to press reports, took awhile to get it.

Like Gergen, Morris reaches out to Democrats and Republicans. But while Gergen hews to centrists, Morris hews to anything. As a strategist, Morris has worked for thoughtful Republicans such as Massachusetts Governor William Weld and irritable Republicans such as John Knox, a Georgia gubernatorial candidate who was Morris's client just last year. Knox's campaign took a legitimate issue—the state's confederate flag—and fanned it in an incendiary way. And, say insiders, Morris ignored the pleas of Clinton friends and worked for Jay Dickey, an Arkansas congressman who ran against a Clinton ally. Morris's client Dickey says of abortion in cases of incest: "I think incest can be handled as a family matter within the family." Jesse Helms was a Morris client, too.

It's not just Morris's flexibility that Clinton admires. It's his mind. Morris can do tricks, like write a political ad on the spot. "Thirty seconds," he'll chirp proudly. He developed a polling technique where voters are given serious arguments to ponder rather than quickie

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

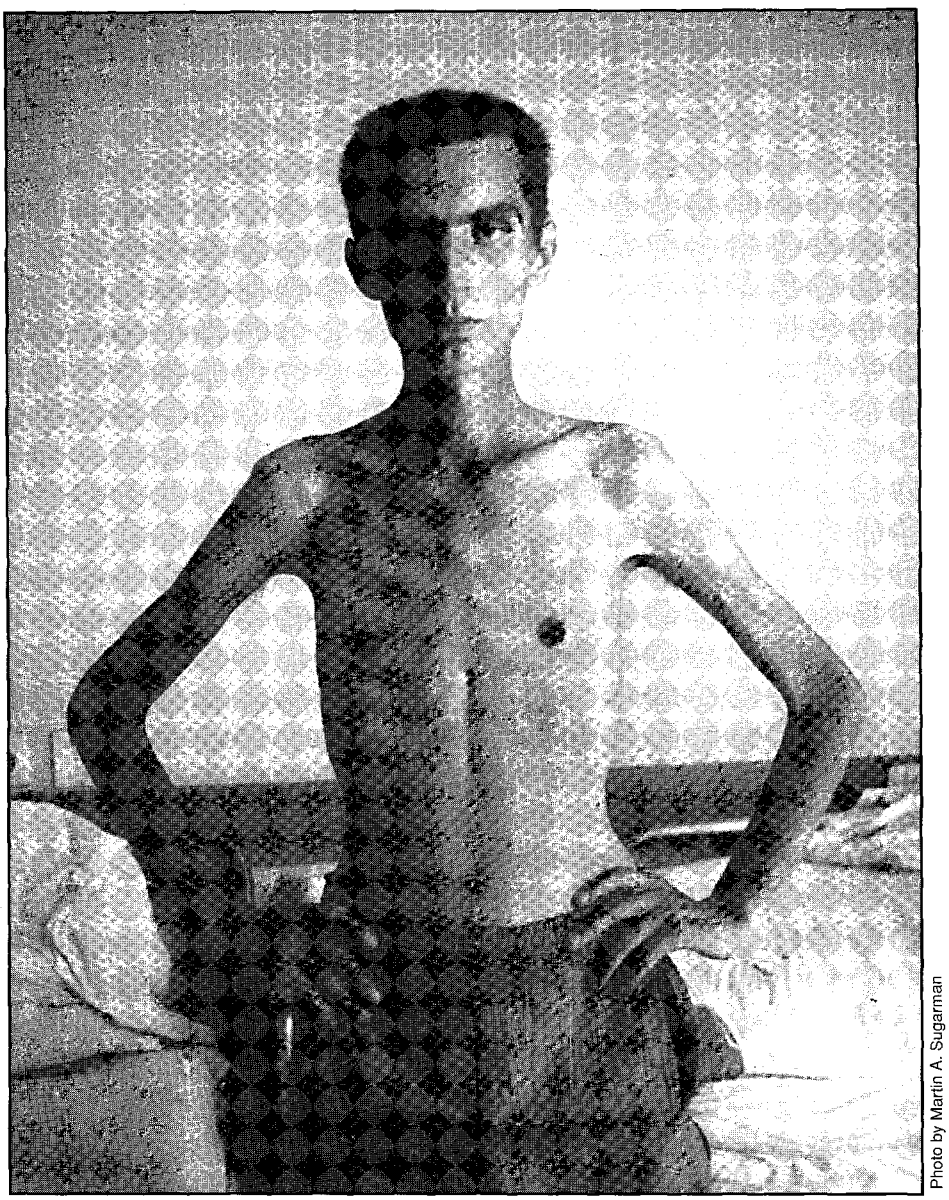


Photo by Martin A. Sugarman

President Clinton, You Have Allowed the Perpetration of Genocide in Bosnia Under the Sponsorship of the United Nations.

Urge the President to unilaterally lift the arms embargo.
Call 202-456-1111.
Or fax 202-456-2461.

MUSLIM PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL
3010 WILSHIRE BLVD. SUITE 217 • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90010 • 213-383-3443

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

queries about what turns them on. To his eternal credit, Morris quietly helped a generation of governors find a sexy vocabulary for boring but important issues like raising the drinking age (Massachusetts's Ed King) and education reform (Texas's Mark White and Clinton). Morris's willingness to cut right *and* left has helped Clinton sharpen his take on sensible liberal issues like meat inspection and environmental protection.

But what has really cemented Morris's bond to Clinton is what might be called The Explanation—a narrative that explains why the president has had such a hard time over the past thirty-plus months even as the economy grows. For Clinton, The Explanation is how he blames others. In 1992, candidate Clinton constantly chided aides for his own failings such as the middle-class tax cut—an ill-conceived notion that allowed Paul Tsongas to seize the mantle of the thinking man's candidate. No one made the Arkansas governor embrace the cut; yet, as late as the eve of the New Hampshire primary, *Newsweek* reported, a painfully oblivious Clinton told aides that their middle-class tax cut—not Gennifer Flowers or the draft—was killing him. As president, Clinton sought other forms of The Explanation. He has complained that he does not have as big a forum as Rush Limbaugh. That Clinton made such self-pitying remarks aboard Air Force One didn't seem to bother him.

According to sources familiar with their conversations, after the November GOP landslide, Clinton and Morris—in hours of late-night phone calls—refined The Explanation. Clinton wasn't to blame for the loss. Congress was. Starting in 1992, Clinton and Morris mythologized, the presidency was hijacked. That's when Clinton was duped by the Washington establishment into cozying up to the Congress. By accommodating the likes of Richard Gephardt and George Mitchell, Clinton had embraced the world of his adviser George Stephanopoulos and abandoned that of Ross Perot. Campaign finance reform, the line-item veto, lobbying restrictions, cuts in congressional staff and perks—the issues that were talismanic for voters who wanted the stables cleaned were given scant attention, while notions riddled with political-and-policy pitfalls, such as the stimulus bill, bound the president. The GOP's willingness to use filibusters in the Senate now meant that a super-majority was needed there; and the House Republican recalcitrance meant that Clinton wound up scrambling for bare liberal majorities. He had become his party's prisoner.

The day after the 1994 disaster, Clinton decided to stop being a jailbird. No more appeasing congressional barons. Now, Clinton would triangulate like crazy; and the GOP would, Morris predicts, be "defanged." In 1995, Congress will pass a balanced budget and a welfare plan. In 1996, the GOP nominee will be without an issue. Forced on to the turf of assault weapons, abortion rights and the like, Clinton wins.

The Explanation isn't wrong, but it doesn't explain everything. Distancing himself from Congress and the GOP won't cut it for three reasons, two of which aren't Clinton's fault and one of which surely is. First, even if Congress and Clinton can get welfare and budget agreements, what's to stop them from continuing to bash? In 1994, the GOP stuck the spender label on Clinton even though he cut the deficit; in 1996, they'll be on his case again. And will welfare disappear? Please. It won't be defanged in 1996 anymore than it was in 1988 when Congress embraced the Family Support Act.

Second, Washington has a schizophrenic view of moderates. On one hand, the city worships moderation. Just look at the press lavished on the Democratic Leadership Council; notice the proliferation of post-ideological columnists such as *The Washington Post*'s E.J. Dionne. And yet modern Washington can't stand a moderate president. Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, George Bush—and Bill Clinton—all get lampooned as wimps. In the end, Reaganesque certitude or the appearance thereof seems to translate better in the Oval Office.

And there's Clinton himself. After all, we've been down this "move to the center" road before, and Clinton couldn't quite stay there. (A cursory Nexis search turns up seventy-five articles using the phrase.) Recently the president ripped into a few moderates over a *Time* column chronicling their ire. I've been with you, barked the president, and you've stuck it to me. Despite Morris's rise, they will again. •

Michael Jackson, Moby Dick of pop.

HOOKED

By Stanley Crouch

It used to be that if one didn't hurry up and say something about a show business event, the boat train was gone, splashing egg in the face of the slowpoke commentator. Today's commercial questions center around how long a product built to super stardom can maintain a position at the top of the huckster's calculated wave. Then those questions break down into how much print and electronic media space it can attract. The final issue is whether or not the product can become a marlin pulling the ship of public gullibility on and on until—Lord have mercy on us!—it ends up on the deck, not a real fish but a motorized piece of plastic counterfeit sporting a serious price tag. Its falseness doesn't matter because so many of us, the hook actually in our own mouths, have been trained to ceaselessly admire and drool over the special effects of the marketplace. We resent anyone interrupting our freedom to pay for being duped. We wear our hooks with pride.

That is why the Michael Jackson phenomenon helps us face what has happened to our society as issues cut across all false fire walls of race, class, gender, religion.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At 36, Jackson represents both the hard facts of open opportunity and the swollen vision of self-worth that have evolved in our narcissistic culture. A now-bone-colored big, big fish in the media, Jackson's every move foams up cultural essences that are at the nub of our perpetually embattled democratic grandeur and our equally persistent childishness. He is an entertainer whom we have watched rise from an itty bitty cute kid to a man remade quite remarkably by modern surgical techniques, all the while maintaining his emotional position in the yellow submarine of adolescent sensibility. That is why his work, at its core, is a summation of the inflated failure that now dominates our popular arts, where the value of youth is hysterically championed at the expense of a mature sense of life. This exploits the insecurities of young people by telling them, over and over, that never growing up is the best defense against an oppressive world where fun isn't given its proper due. That kind of exploitation made Jackson the King of Pop.

MICHAEL JACKSON BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Even so, none of this came about by natural means. It was all connected to the gold rush entertainment possibilities of a country such as ours, where there are so many people that consistently hooking no more than 1 percent of the public wallet guarantees millions. That is exactly what went down. As a boy and part of the Jackson Five, he was pushed into the world of show business by his father Joe's ambition, which perfectly coincided with the slick Motown packaging of Berry Gordy and the high wind of teenage bad taste that accounts for so many blips on the sales screen. But Jackson eventually went further than anyone could have imagined.

He broke out of the Jackson Five and became a single, flipping and flopping his way into the air of international celebrity. Along the way, his looks changed. The tumbleweed afro of the past was replaced by a dark, gooey mop. His skin went from brown to beige to bone. The wide-angle nose went on a starvation diet that achieved ultra-slimness and an upward Peter Pan turn worthy of a self-willed Disney cartoon. Then the chin came clean with a cleft. The former child star was ready for another degree of prime time. As his videos and concert performances show, Jackson extended his stardom by adding to his repertoire all the basic trends of his idiom, white or black, and the slogans that pass for ideas. Always a mediocre singer given to progressively unimaginative phrasing and overstatement, Jackson delivers a shallow version of gospel, some maudlin rhythm and blues, uses the false bravado of hard rock inflection, postures as a love child reciting the pieties necessary for world peace, stoops to the vulgar gestures that are a priggish shorthand for lower-class rage, alludes to the spanking that paddles under the brand name of sadomasochism and executes a few leftover Jackson Five dance steps that serve as quicksilver interludes within a choreographed synthesis of cheerleading moves, navy signaling without flags and aerobic exercises. His album *Thriller* sold more than 40 million units worldwide, 24 million in the United States, which meant that 236 million Americans didn't buy it.

Michael Jackson became more than a whale of a success. He also developed into something of an entertainment blob, swallowing up whatever he came in contact with or whatever took him further into the mythology of pop aristocracy, where small but glimmering talents are elevated with an hysteria that bespeaks the swill of bad faith our culture has been guzzling since Woodstock. An eccentric jellyfish on the surface but truly a canny businessman, Jackson snatched up the Beatles catalog when it was there for the buying, startling Paul McCartney and angering Ringo Starr. He was more on top than ever.

Then, after years of seeming a goody blue suede shoes, Jackson was sucked into a whirlpool of controversy by a child molestation scandal in which he was accused of slurping a 12-year-old boy in unmentionable places. The response was dramatic: Jackson canceled a tour that was in progress, claiming addiction to pain killers. He disap-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

peared. He reappeared. He went on television complaining that the police examined his wee wee. He lost endorsements. He settled out of court for a large but unrevealed amount. Not one to stay outside the limelight, Jackson suddenly married a Lisa Marie who was the daughter of Elvis Presley, that Tarzan of rock and roll, he who swung to ever-larger bank accounts on the vines of pop Negro rhythms and redneck sentimentality. It brought two entertainment kingdoms of swamp water together, Neverland flowing into Graceland.

At every point, the King of Pop was greatly helped by the arrival and evolution of promotional aids like "Entertainment Tonight," MTV, VH-1 and channel E! These television shows and cable stations are dedicated to nothing but the marketing of products, few serious questions asked. Hype and genuflection are their trade. For the good ship of show business, pop stars, directors, choreographers and technicians are interviewed, promotional videos are shown, films of films being made, videos of the making of videos, all tagged by the glistening barnacles of a forced enthusiasm American entertainment used to lampoon at every chance.

Such things, along with the regular avenues of promotion, guarantee that we will have Michael Jackson and his latest recording, *HIStory*, pushed in our ears and faces for quite a while. In fact, Sony Entertainment has already spent $30 million on a promotional campaign planned to continue through two Christmas seasons.

Yet this kind of attention and success doesn't reduce the all-American tendencies to self-inflated melodrama and even more self-righteous bitching. While Jackson's millions allow him to build fantasy kingdoms, he also usurps the mantle of wealthy nut that Howard Hughes once wore with such unflagging madness. Like Hughes, Jackson also suffers from the distinct paranoia that those who must face legions of jealousy sometimes orchestrate into endless symphonies of plots and sub-plots, ranging from the press to the government. The alienation that comes with vast success builds upon the familiar theme of the poor little rich kid and becomes the basis for innumerable expressions of complaint.

This paranoia has not been missed, even in the world of rock criticism, where posterior-licking and fantasies of aesthetic value are assiduously taught. Though there was some understandable alarm expressed when Jackson's gargantuan poor-mouthing and his lyrics were examined in the double-CD of *HIStory*, and while some rock critics even noted the fascist imagery of the video, what all of them missed was the problem at the very center of pop music, which is the function of its incantational rhythms.

Incantation always has two audience possibilities in our culture: one is the collective fused into a throbbing vitality through the repeating groove of a syncopated dance-beat; the other is the transformation of individuals into a mindless mass of putty in the hands of a band or a central figure. The distinction is important because the vital collective is the highest achievement of dance-oriented rhythm. Essential to that vitality is the expression of adult emotion. While blues might also have simple musical elements similar to those pop has derived from it, blues is fundamentally a music that fights self-pity and even holds it up to ridicule, the singer scorning all self-deceptive attempts at ducking responsibility for at least part of the bad state of affairs.

In jazz, for another example, the rhythmic phenomenon of swing is posed as an antidote to the sentimentality of the popular song, with the improvisation allowing for collective inventions that insert emotional irony and complexity into the music. The evolution of pop music is quite different because, far more often than not, the rhythm is used to *reinforce* the sentimentality of the material. Those pop rhythms now arrive in a form that has largely submitted to the mechanical, often using electronic programmed "drums" for static pulsations that never interact with the rest of the music, a supreme example of the very alienation it so successfully foments.

It is because of the subordination of everything to the beat that the lyrics so often go by, barely noticed. When they are noticed, especially when expressing the choked up, immature resentment of a demanding adult world, the words either become anthems of estrangement or bludgeons against some vision of corrupt and hypocritical authority. But, as with fascism, the authority of a mass "conspiracy"—of bankers, lawyers, politicians, educators, law enforcement and so on—is rejected through obeisance to a figure of gargantuan certitude. That is where the big beat of pop and the big idol of the rock star meet in the fascist garden of dance-oriented totalitarianism.

Michael Jackson has been evolving in this direction over the last few years, one video after another showing either the world or his opposition melting into mass chorus lines overwhelmed by his magical leadership. We see this most clearly in the video for "HIStory," where Jackson marches in front of legions of troops, children scream that they love him, and a huge statue of the King of Pop, one as ugly as any Hitler, Stalin or Mao would have appreciated, is unveiled. We understand in clear terms the assertion that Hitler was the first rock star because of the way his rallies used technology to create hypnotic rituals of enormously magnified passion.

The Indian poet and philosopher Tagore once observed that the invention of the pen knife leaped past the centuries of evolution that resulted in the claw, but that we often find ourselves in a world where those with the pen-knife mentalities of adolescents command weapons of destruction that they aren't mature enough to handle. When we make embittered little boys into idols by genuflecting before a briny charisma that has negligible adult application, we shouldn't be surprised when they decide they should lead the world into a resurrection of an Eden, through which they will walk in the cool of the day, omnipotent as the jealous God of the Old Testament. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Work in Progress

Is Goals 2000 about to get the ax? That's what Republican budget cutters are telling us, but we will be making a big mistake if we let that happen. Goals 2000 has been in operation for only one year, and it is already taking hold across the country. If it goes, we will lose an important chance to reform our education system and raise the achievement of all our students.

Goals 2000 is designed to improve education by encouraging states to create education systems similar to the successful systems in other countries. That means setting high and clear standards for what *all* students should know in core academic subjects, designing curriculums and assessments based on those standards, and establishing consequences for students that will make school count. Goals 2000 provides the states, which are responsible for education, with financial incentives to fashion their own world-class standards.

The good news is that 49 of the 50 states are revising their standards.

A new study by the AFT, "Making Standards Matter: A 50-State Progress Report on Efforts to Raise Academic Standards," offers the first national data on what states are doing and what their standards look like. The report asked these questions:

- Which states are developing academic standards?
- What about their quality? Are they based in core subjects—like English, math, science, and history? Are they clear and specific enough to guide districts in setting up good curriculums and assessments? Have states looked at what other countries expect of their students?
- Are states developing assessment systems to find out whether students are meeting the standards?
- Will the standards have teeth? Which states plan to make them count for students, and in what way?

The good news is that 49 of the 50 states—all but Iowa—are revising their standards to focus more on core academic content. They have moved energetically to use the standards-setting process as a starting point for reform. The not-surprising news is that states' initial efforts vary widely in quality, and most do not yet provide curriculum frameworks concise enough to guide schools. But there is a broad consensus that standards do matter and are the foundation for improving student achievement.

The states still have far to go, though. Only 7 have compared their proposals with standards in other countries. Only 13 have devised standards specific enough to serve as the basis for a core academic curriculum. And while more than half link their standards to tests evaluating student progress, many of the standards are too vague to generate meaningful assessments. Moreover, only 7 states require students to meet their 10th-, 11th- or 12th-grade standards in order to graduate.

In some ways, getting the standards right is the hardest part. Everything else that states and school districts do to strengthen learning rests on that foundation—creating a detailed and sequenced curriculum, choosing appropriate textbooks and other materials, developing assessments that measure precisely what students have learned, and guiding the development of teachers.

Here's a useless standard: "Students should be able to understand, analyze, and interpret historical events, conditions, trends and issues to develop historical perspective" (history, no grade level indicated). If you were using this to construct a social-studies curriculum, you wouldn't even know what eras or countries to focus on, let alone what information students should learn and be tested on.

Here's a better one: "Students should be able to describe how U.S. federalism was transformed during the Great Depression by the policies of the New Deal and how that transformation continues to affect U.S. society today" (history, grades 9-12). This standard is focused and clear; it defines the subject to be taught, the topics to be covered (federalism, Depression, New Deal, social policy), and the historical concepts and information students are to master.

Obviously, a lot remains to be done. But it would be a mistake to conclude that Goals 2000 should be abandoned. It took other countries with successful standards-based systems many decades of effort and revision to build them. And any large-scale change takes time. You have to see what's working, what's not, and what needs to be tinkered with. In fact, that's exactly what you would expect.

It would also be wrong to conclude that the American public is indifferent to standards. In a recent Public Agenda poll, 82 percent of parents said they want clear guidelines in every grade and every subject for what students learn and teachers teach, and 70 percent said they want higher promotion standards.

The ambitious reform begun by Goals 2000 needs the money the bill provides in order to survive and develop. It also needs a way for states to compare notes with other states and other countries, a chance to share ideas and learn from others' success or failure. And Goals 2000 needs time. Americans should make sure it gets the time it needs.

For a copy of "Making Standards Matter: A 50-State Progress Report on Efforts to Raise Academic Standards," send $6 to AFT Order Department, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. Ask for Item #266.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

ADVERTISEMENT
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

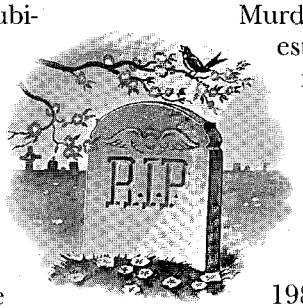
AFTER YOU'VE GONE

NYN RIP

By Jim Sleeper

If one can learn anything new about the deceased by noticing who speaks at their funerals, then the recent mourning for *New York Newsday*, the 10-year-old "tabloid in a tutu," which was killed by its parent, Times Mirror Company, on July 16, was instructive. Quite inadvertently, the encomia revealed that it wasn't really "the people" who'd lost a paper; it was liberal civic activists, academics and upscale "diversity" enthusiasts. And it wasn't just that Wall Street had abandoned Main Street; focus-group-driven corporate media had also lost an outlet by misconstruing their audiences and the urban condition, with assistance from well-meaning journalists who'd misconstrued them, too.

"We mourn last week's pitiable and highly dubious killing of *New York Newsday*," intoned *The New Yorker*, wearing its Sunday best like the tipsy daughter of a fallen old family at the funeral of the only civic leader still speaking to her. The deceased had been no match for "the great and earnest *Times*," of course, but without *New York Newsday*, "our newsstands are poorer, our city a diminished place." Actually, *NYN*'s incursions into the Gray Lady's backyard had panicked her into a strong Metro section makeover. The upstart had gambled not only on the demise of one of the tabloids but, even if both the *Daily News* and the *New York Post* survived, on becoming an alternative for *Times* readers seeking more intimate coverage of their city. With palpable, if understated, relief, the *Times* editorial eulogy judged *NYN*'s death sentence "a sound economic call," if "a sad outcome nonetheless." It's hard to believe someone wasn't popping champagne on West 43rd Street, not because *Newsday* had threatened *Times* profits but because it had often outdone the *Times*'s multiculturalist local coverage. Yet both papers' readerships remained heavily white and middle class.



The true story of *New York Newsday*'s failure is heartbreaking, not only for writers who've lost jobs but for "the people," who are little better served by the tabloids they do read than they were by the one they doggedly didn't. Earlier this year, when the O.J. trial claimed its fifth cover of the *Daily News*, a black community organizer in Brooklyn called to complain. "If my neighbors want *The National Enquirer*, they can get it at the supermarket," she huffed. "They buy the *Daily News* to feel like citizens." That's much less true now than it was twenty years ago. And there begins our tale.

At their best, the city's tabloids ennobled huge working-class audiences by linking their strengths and sufferings to higher cultural and civic aspirations. Like union halls, parish halls and political clubs, tabloids were part of how immigrants became Americans and how workers learned to look down on their social superiors. Many an insurgent's rise became a civic passion play, many a celebrity's fall a morality tale.

If City College was "the poor man's Harvard" for Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, then the *New York Post* of publisher Dorothy Schiff, editor James Wechsler (whose first cousin, my aunt Leah Wechsler Sleeper, introduced me to the *Post* and to columnists Max Lerner and Murray Kempton) was their poor man's *New York Times*. The *News* was Catholics' answer to the WASPy *Herald Tribune*; even now, the readers of my *News* column include well-read prelates in white-ethnic enclaves of the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, plus blacks and Hispanics who first picked up the *News* because it was what white workers were reading when non-whites joined them in the 1960s.

Times and demographics change; today's tabs hang on in a disintegrating civic culture and often treat readers more like stampeding soccer fans than like citizens. In 1977, the liberal *Post* passed from Schiff to Rupert Murdoch and his Fleet Street fly boys, then to real estate developer Peter Kalikow and bankruptcy, then back to Murdoch. The working stiff's *News*, riven by its own racially changing demographics, careened through employee discrimination suits, new owners and strikes, recovering some balance recently under Mortimer Zuckerman.

Into all this came *New York Newsday* in 1985, an offshoot of the fatter, more literary and suburban *Long Island Newsday*. It hired the venerable Kempton and others from the *Post*, the irascible Jimmy Breslin and others from the *News* and a clutch of eager young writers (including me, for five happy years) from smaller papers and journalistic countercultures. It strove mightily to herald a new civic culture; but it was a "multiculture," alas, as suited the paper's yuppified and ethnocentric writers and Times Mirror's penchant for polling its way into diverse market niches by pleasing without giving offense.

So why didn't my Brooklyn caller's neighbors buy it? Probably for one of the reasons I left *NYN* when the *News* offered me a column: there was something too careful and pat about its journalistic term papers on neighborhood economics and demographics, and something faintly patronizing in its portraits of intended readers.

There was also a new economic fault line, too deep for a dreamy multiculturalism to bridge. In 1987, when New York's economy plummeted, *NYN*'s upper-tabloid/lower-*Times* niche shrank so dramatically that the paper "could not make up its mind whether to be a slam-bang tabloid or an intellectual, up-market repast for the cerebral set," as *Post* columnist Ray Kerrison

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wrote last week. Across the ideological chasm, the *Voice*'s Ellen Willis lamented *NYN*'s "often awkward, perhaps quixotic attempt to blend the low-rent tabloid form and a New York proletarian ethic with an educated, middle-class, unfashionably liberal sensibility." Most people couldn't warm to it, even as their civic desert sprouted the racial, sexual and other hostile camps that were glibly ratified in *NYN*'s deadline multicultural patois.

Lacking a more compelling vision of a common civic culture, *NYN* finessed its split personality just as many liberal Democrats do: it became the media equivalent of David Dinkins's failed "gorgeous mosaic" politics. It tried to mesh the honest, gritty, civic-cultural interests of such writers as Kempton and Jim Dwyer with well-meaning journalists' obsessions with race and gender. It "gave readers a searching exploration of the city's black middle class, a page on the New New Yorkers, an investigation of union pay increases and a very gay appreciation of Batman and Robin's nipples—all in the same issue," bragged the lead story in the farewell edition.

Coverage of the "New New Yorkers," troubled neighborhoods and City Hall was often very strong; the Books section, under Jack Schwartz, was the classiest in town. Still, many New Yorkers got stereotyped by *NYN*. In the name of diversity, editors brought in cookie-cutter columnists—the Latina journalist, the gay monitor of homophobic outrages and others who were designated to represent a plethora of identity groups. Even the *Voice*'s Willis thought *NYN*'s "laudable concern with diverse voices sometimes became a self-parodying subservience to the worst aspects of identity politics: I especially hated the Woman Working (She walks! She talks! She plays office politics!)." And if you don't find the reference to Batman and Robin patronizing, try to imagine a *NYN* story "appreciating" Wonder Woman's nipples.

The paper's volatile mix of class-based liberalism and race-and-gender discourse sometimes compromised its coverage of battles between putatively "oppressed" black demagogues and assimilation-minded immigrants—as in the Korean boycott. Editorials were often impervious even to Democrats' disenchantments with New York's gargantuan welfare state.

And *NYN* had arrived too late for most of the old *Post*'s Jews and the *News*'s few liberal Catholics, who'd moved up and out; too late even for many urban blacks and Latinos, who'd either slipped out of the newspaper culture or clung to the *News*. Worse, the tabloids' mass reading public is evaporating into cyberspace and aliteracy; the *News*, *Post* and *Times* combined sell fewer copies in the city each day now than the 1.5 million the *News* alone sold in 1983.

Will the mass dailies die, too, or can they profit while helping more people to become good—and literate—citizens of tomorrow? Accepting a journalism award in 1979, Murray Kempton (then at the *Post*) imagined a subway passenger reading his column and leaving it behind as the train continued "its long, mournful journey" to outermost Queens. He envisioned another passenger, a youth awakening to the world beyond family and neighborhood, chancing upon the discarded paper and his column, "and, by God, you had better be ready," Kempton concluded, admonishing himself and us all.

Either that young reader no longer exists, or he wants something better than a "skillful deconstruction" of civic power (as the *Voice*'s Richard Goldstein described *Newsday*'s forte) by a company that panders to "identity" in a drive for elusive market shares. If the future is bleak, it's because liberal cultural patronizers have joined with capitalist pitchmen to drive potentially great newspapers, along with Kempton's dream reader, into the past.

JIM SLEEPER, a political columnist for the *Daily News*, was an op-ed editor and editorial writer at *New York Newsday* from 1988 to 1993.

Can a new leader save the AFL-CIO?

SWEENEY AGONISTES

By John B. Judis

On January 28, *The Washington Post* ran a story headlined, "KEY UNION LEADERS WANT KIRKLAND TO LEAVE." Reporter Frank Swoboda found "near-unanimous concern" among members of AFL-CIO's executive council, composed of thirty-five union officials, that federation President Lane Kirkland was "unable to meet labor's new needs." But the article didn't quote a single union leader by name, suggesting the revolt against Kirkland was still just simmering. Six months later, it has boiled over. Kirkland has retired, and the union is facing a vigorous presidential contest between John Sweeney, the president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and Thomas Donahue, Kirkland's secretary-treasurer, who replaced

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him last week as president until the vote at the October national convention.

It's the first election contest in the federation since 1894 and the first open leadership split since 1935, when John L. Lewis, the president of the United Mine Workers and proponent of industrial unionism, decked craft unionist William L. Hutcheson, the president of the Carpenters Union. That punch, leading to Lewis's walkout from the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), transformed the labor movement, the Democratic Party and the urban workplace. At its height during the 1950s, the reunited AFL-CIO commanded the allegiance of about half of private sector workers and was, perhaps, the most powerful interest group in Washington.

This time the blowup began with a press leak rather than a punch. That's symptomatic both of the greater political role of the press and of the depressed condition of public debate within the federation. In its preliminary stages, the campaign to oust Kirkland more closely resembled an Eastern European coup than the kind of noisy squabble that should occur in a democratic organization. The stakes are also different today. In 1935, the labor movement was poised on the edge of precipitous growth, with only an ineffective leadership standing in the way; today, beset by a hostile Congress and the continuing shift toward services and away from labor's traditional manufacturing base, the movement totters on the edge of further decline. A change of leadership is one means by which labor could prevent itself, in Sweeney's words, from "going down the tubes."

Kirkland's inadequacies as a national leader hang heavily over the current contest for the federation's future. They provide a standard against which both Sweeney and even Donahue measure their proposals for change. In his first years, Kirkland scored some notable successes, bringing back into the federation's fold unions that his predecessor had either alienated or kicked out. But, in recent years, his style of leadership seemed particularly ill-suited to stemming the movement's decline—down from 23 percent of the non-agricultural workforce in 1979 when Kirkland became president to 15.5 percent today.

At a time when labor's local image and its success in organizing drives have been heavily influenced by how it communicates nationally, Kirkland displayed a disdain for the press that made it impossible for him to convey labor's position. He told labor leaders who urged him to appear on television that he found it "demeaning," referring to television interview programs as "gong shows." As Kirkland's critics pointed out, in the absence of any effort on his part, labor's enemies have convinced the public that unions are parochial and self-serving, and a major cause of industrial decline.

When Kirkland did appear publicly, he was not someone with whom a young hospital orderly or supermarket clerk could identify. A self-styled Southern aristocrat who traced his roots back before the Revolution and who delighted in displaying his voluminous vocabulary, Kirkland seemed more the college president than the labor leader. He was, said one former AFL-CIO official, "an effete Southern-style intellectual."

With labor foundering at home, Kirkland was, strange as it may seem, more interested in foreign than domestic policy. A cold war hawk in the tradition of Senator Henry Jackson, Kirkland transferred these preoccupations to the federation itself: he made the AFL-CIO a kind of city-state with its own foreign policy. At his first meeting as president, he invited Defense Secretary Harold Brown to argue for a larger defense budget and for draft registration. International affairs took up the largest single chunk of the AFL-CIO budget and continued, even after the cold war, to preoccupy Kirkland and the AFL-CIO. While some of Kirkland's concerns, such as GATT, NAFTA and the behavior of multinational corporations, had a direct bearing on American labor, many simply reflected his determination to shape the world.

Worse, Kirkland's strategy for reviving labor at home has been deeply flawed. He rejected pleas for the federation to take a more active role in organizing workers, arguing that the AFL-CIO should leave the job of creating and defending unions to its affiliates. Instead, Kirkland has focused the federation's efforts on national, and particularly presidential, politics. Kirkland believed that labor was declining mainly because employers were able to take advantage of both loopholes in the labor law and a Republican-appointed National Labor Relations Board to discourage unionization and break strikes. Only a pro-labor Democratic president could change the law and the composition of the board.

Kirkland was right about the damage done by weak labor laws, but his strategy contained an endless loop: to become stronger, the labor movement had to change the laws; but to change the laws, it had to become stronger. More specifically, as the labor movement's numbers have continued to dwindle, and as its national reputation has continued to deteriorate, it has become less capable of electing a pro-labor Democrat and sustaining him in office. In the 1984 election, when Kirkland got the entire federation to endorse Walter Mondale in the primary, its support actually damaged Mondale by making him look like the tool of a special interest group.

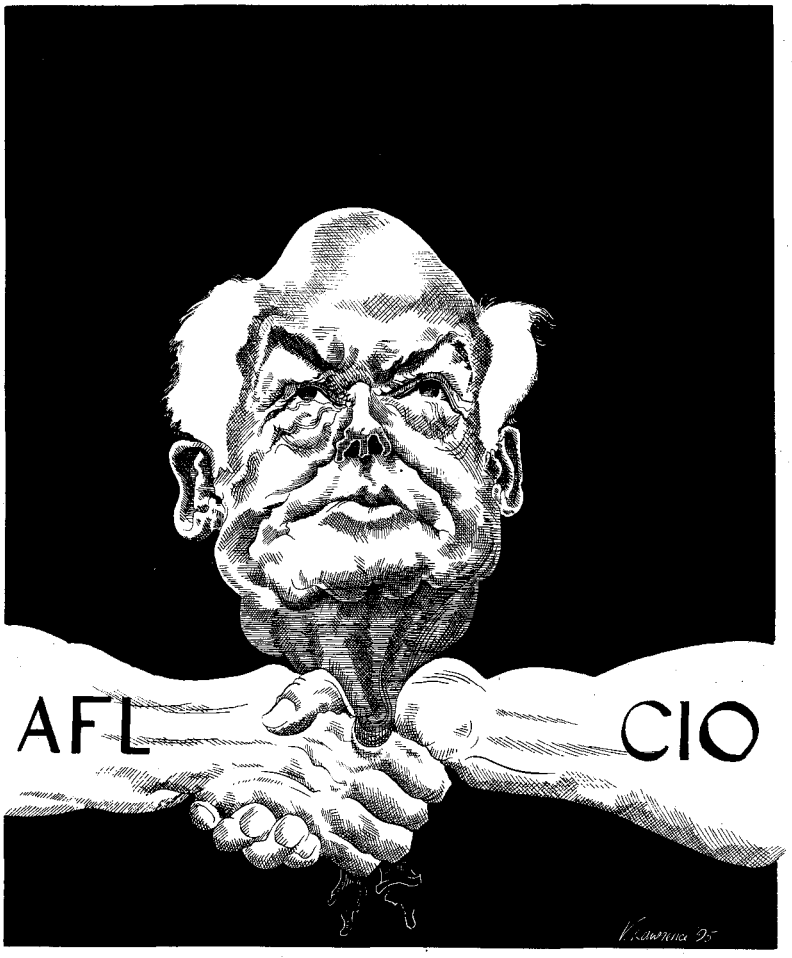
Since that fiasco, Kirkland has repeatedly discouraged attempts to redirect the federation from his chosen path. In 1988, for instance, Wayne Glenn, the president of the 275,000-member United Paperworkers International Union, wanted Kirkland's help. Glenn was faced with a bitter strike at an International Paper mill in Maine where the company had hired 1,050 workers to replace the union strikers. International Paper turned to this tactic—little used since the 1930s—to force Glenn's union to accept an unfavor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

able settlement. Glenn asked Kirkland at an executive council meeting to support legislation, drafted by Maine Representative Joseph Brennan, to outlaw the use of replacement strikers. Kirkland demurred, saying the federation had other priorities.

Kirkland eventually sloughed off Glenn's request onto the tiny Industrial-Union Department of the AFL-CIO. Over the next three years, Glenn and the department mobilized a nationwide campaign for the legislation. A bill eventually passed the House but failed to overcome a Senate filibuster. During most of the congressional debate in 1993, Kirkland himself was in Europe. The experience convinced Glenn and other labor leaders that Kirkland was afflicted with a paralyzing defeatism and detachment.

Even after conservative Republicans captured Congress last November, Kirkland seemed determined not to try anything new. In December, after the Republicans won the House and Senate, Gerald McEntee, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) convened other unions to develop a new political effort, the '95 Project, to target vulnerable Republican House members for 1996. The AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education refused to participate, and Kirkland turned down McEntee's request to match the union's contribution to the project.



JOHN SWEENEY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The rumblings against Kirkland among people such as Glenn and McEntee began in the late '80s, but union leaders didn't voice them publicly until this year. Kirkland, who was capable of withering rejoinders, intimidated many of his critics. More important, the organizational culture of the AFL-CIO discouraged public criticism and debate. None of the major union presidents except those of the mineworkers and steelworkers is elected by his membership. Instead, they are chosen by convention delegates whom the presidents themselves often have a hand in selecting. These presidents were loath to began a process of unruly debate in which they and their unions might get swept up.

The AFL-CIO had also begun to suffer from the kind of intellectual sclerosis that often affects declining institutions, as staff and secondary leaders grow increasingly reluctant to criticize the top leadership, fearing that they will reinforce widespread criticism from outside. But by stifling criticism the labor movement only fed cynicism about the federation among the public and the press. Within the union, activists privately compared Kirkland to former Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev and the federation leadership to the Politburo.

The furor created by Swoboda's article helped force into the open the issue of Kirkland's tenure. This February, on the eve of the executive council meeting in Bal Harbour, Kirkland's critics from eleven unions came together for the first time. These included Glenn, Owen Bieber of the United Auto Workers, George Becker of the Steelworkers and Ron Carey of the Teamsters. Sweeney and McEntee were the acknowledged leaders of the revolt. Both men's unions have gained members over the last decade, SEIU almost doubling its membership to 1.1 million since Sweeney took charge in 1980. They embody the potential of labor to adapt to a new high-tech economy dominated by lower-paid services.

Within the federation, the two men had played far different roles. The abrasive McEntee had made his share of enemies in jurisdictional battles and in conflicts over the federation's political stands, while the genial Sweeney was a conciliator who had brought together the federation's unions, split between single-payer and pay-or-play advocates, in support of Clinton's managed competition. Both men had succeeded brilliantly in building their unions: McEntee through maneuvering in state and local politics, Sweeney through innovative organizing tactics.

Sweeney has been willing to hire anybody or do anything that he believed could help organize workers. Although he was never on the left wing of the labor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

movement, he welcomed into SEIU the Cleveland-based Nine-to-Five, an organization for secretaries begun by a New Left veteran of the Indochina Peace Campaign. He has championed Justice for Janitors with its guerrilla theater-style community organizing strategy, and he is working on a project with a national community group, ACORN, to organize low-income workers in the South. Though 61-year-old Sweeney is a Catholic and a straight-laced family man, SEIU is the only union with a gay and lesbian caucus.

McEntee and Sweeney began talking about removing Kirkland two years ago, but they didn't start plotting until last summer, after Sweeney privately urged Kirkland to retire in favor of Thomas Donahue. At Bal Harbour, Sweeney and McEntee formed a Committee for Change, with McEntee as chair. The battle was then joined.

Support for Kirkland's ouster was far from unanimous. Those backing Kirkland included the heads of several large unions that were also known for their innovative leadership and that had recently gained in membership, including Morton Bahr of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), Douglas Dority of the United Food and Commercial Workers and Al Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers. Some of them had been privately critical of Kirkland but still preferred him to his declared opponents, whether out of dislike for McEntee or distaste for a divisive public squabble.

Faced with revolt, Donahue, Kirkland's deputy, played a waiting game. He had made no secret of his ambition to succeed Kirkland. He had told Kirkland that he planned to retire if Kirkland ran for reelection. Donahue was also close to Sweeney, whom he had known since they served together in 1960 on the staff of a New York SEIU local. But Donahue's loyalty to Kirkland and his concern about the "discontent" created by the anti-Kirkland campaign outweighed his desire to be president. In early May, he announced his retirement and threw his support behind Kirkland's reelection. The Committee for Change began to seek a candidate to run against Kirkland.

Recognizing his unpopularity, McEntee ruled himself out in favor of Sweeney. The committee also chose Richard Trumka, the president of the mineworkers, to run as secretary-treasurer and AFSCME Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson for a new position as executive vice president, which will have to be approved by the AFL-CIO convention. Both candidates were meant to complement Sweeney and overcome his ostensible weaknesses. Chavez-Thompson is a Hispanic woman—significant in a movement that has been dominated by white men—and Trumka is relatively young (45), militant and telegenic, with a bushy mustache reminiscent of Marlon Brando in *Viva Zapata*. A third-generation miner-turned-lawyer, Trumka has forged a strategy that shows a willingness both to experiment in labor-management cooperation and to strike when management proved intransigent. Among some pro-Sweeney unions, Trumka is seen as Sweeney's eventual successor, as Yeltsin to his Gorbachev.

The committee also wrote a platform on which Sweeney, Trumka and Chavez-Thompson could run and which was based on the premise that labor could break out of Kirkland's endless loop. The platform's preamble stated: "We must first organize despite the law if we are ever to organize with the law." Much of it is typical bureaucratic boilerplate, pledging to solve problems through starting new committees or departments (I counted fourteen in fourteen pages of text). But its underlying thrust is to reverse course from Kirkland's years: devoting a third of the federation's funds to helping workers organize, particularly in the Sunbelt, revamping the federation's insular public affairs operation and framing the federation's international efforts "in terms of the self-interests of American workers."

By June, ten new unions joined the Committee for Change, bringing its total to twenty-one unions representing 56 percent of the union membership and of the delegates to the October convention. On June 12, Kirkland, facing inevitable defeat, announced he would retire at the August 1 executive council meeting in Chicago.

If Kirkland had retired earlier, Donahue would have been the consensus choice to replace him. But, the day after Donahue announced that he would run to succeed Kirkland, McEntee declared on behalf of the Committee for Change that Sweeney would oppose him. Donahue called all the federation presidents to ask them to support him and his running mate, CWA Vice President Barbara Easterling, but couldn't dislodge any of Sweeney's backers.

Some union officials believe there is little difference between Donahue and Sweeney or between the coalitions that support them. Within the federation, Donahue supported some of the ventures that Kirkland ignored or opposed, such as the federation's Organizing Institute or the Committee on the Evolution of Work. His first act last week as interim president was to pledge new funds for organizing. He has championed an interesting plan to create a kind of national workers' organization, modeled on the American Association of Retired Persons, that would provide services and represent workers politically without committing them to joining unions. Donahue even has some points to recommend him over Sweeney. He is more comfortable on television and in debate than Sweeney. "With Donahue, we have somebody who has been around," says Al Shanker.

But the 66-year-old Donahue also exhibits some of Kirkland's flaws. He is, or has become, a New York Irish version of Kirkland—Chernenko to Kirkland's Brezhnev. If Kirkland comes off as a college professor, Donahue appears to be a sharp lawyer or accountant, not someone like Trumka or even Sweeney, with whom workers could identify. He can display Kirkland's effete arrogance. When a reporter innocently asked him at a news conference this June if, before Kirkland, all fed-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eration presidents had "died with their boots on," Donahue pronounced the question a "calumny."

Like Kirkland, too, he seems to be fascinated by foreign policy. When I interviewed him last year, he only really became animated when discussing events overseas. (By contrast, when I asked Sweeney last month about foreign policy, he insisted he would retain the federation's commitments but began talking about strikes in Pittsburgh and New York that would have benefited from overseas union help.)

Donahue's strategic reasoning also seems caught in the same circular logic as Kirkland's. "The problem is not that you can't organize," Donahue told me. "You can organize if you have enough money to spend and enough money to support the people who get fired for doing it. But there isn't enough money in the world to do that."

Perhaps more important, the coalitions backing the two men have different internal agendas. Sweeney's coalition has challenged the deadly culture of the federation—its unwillingness to question leaders and policies publicly or to face up to labor's own dismal condition. Donahue and his supporters have criticized Sweeney precisely for raising these kind of concerns. When Sweeney warned SEIU's convention last May that the labor movement was becoming "irrelevant to the vast majority of unorganized workers in our country," Shanker, Dority and Donahue attacked him for spreading "management propaganda."

Sweeney could be a bust as AFL-CIO president. He is not an imposing public figure and hasn't been tested in the cauldron of Washington media politics. But he was willing to break the deadly silence that marked Kirkland's tenure and to acknowledge that the federation itself might have played a role in labor's decline. That, at least, is a beginning. •

Family values vs. family planning.

THE CONSERVATIVE CASE FOR ABORTION

By Jerry Z. Muller

In contemporary American political debate, struggles over abortion are usually treated as conflicts between rival interpretations of individual rights. Those who favor abortion most often invoke the "right to choose" of the woman who has conceived the fetus. Those who oppose abortion focus on the "right to life" of the fetus. But there is a third position that is largely overlooked. Essentially conservative and "pro-family," it favors abortion as the right choice to promote healthy family life under certain circumstances.

This argument, which emphasizes the social function of the family over the rights of the individual, begins with the assumption that the possibility of choice matters less than the choices made. It argues that the choice to give birth to a child isn't always the right one. In fact, under some conditions, choosing to give birth may be socially dysfunctional, morally irresponsible or even cruel: inimical to the forces of stability and bourgeois responsibility conservatives cherish.

Supporters of middle-class family values may agree with many Christian Coalition positions. They may advocate raising the income-tax deduction for dependent children, question the legitimation of homosexuality and condemn violence and sex in the cultural marketplace. But the right-to-life position undermines their fundamentally conservative effort to strengthen purposeful families. For the right-to-life position requires massive government intrusion into the most intimate of realms, removes decisions about whether to bear children from those who are to raise them and threatens what many conservatives regard as the most significant mediating institution in modern capitalist society, the family. The success of the right-to-life position would lead almost inevitably to an increase in the number of children born into socially dysfunctional settings.

The prime obstacle to the right-to-life movement is not feminism. It is the millions of more or less conservative middle-class parents who know that, if their teenage daughter were to become pregnant, they would advise her to get an abortion rather than marry out of necessity or go through the trauma of giving birth and then placing the child up for adoption. Many people—young, unmarried, pregnant women loath to bring a child into a family-less environment; parents of a fetus known to be afflicted by a disease such as Tay-Sachs that will make its life painful and short; parents whose children are likely to be born with severe genetic defects, who know that the birth of the fetus will mean pain for

JERRY Z. MULLER's most recent book, *Adam Smith in His Time and Ours*, has just been published in paperback by Princeton University Press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them and for their other children—all choose abortion, not because they fetishize choice but because they value the family. Many couples who know that their offspring will be at risk for genetic diseases and other birth defects owe their actual families to abortion: were it not for the possibility of detecting these diseases in utero and of aborting stricken fetuses, such couples would not risk having children at all.

The right-to-life movement regards human "life" as a good—a claim most of us are broadly inclined to accept. But the right-to-life movement goes further. It regards *all* human life as a good, regardless of the mental, emotional or intellectual capacities of the individual. To right-to-lifers, keeping alive anencephalic infants (children missing all or most of their brains) is a moral imperative. The right-to-life movement regards every degree of human life as equal to the most complete development of human life: that is why the moral status of a fetus two weeks into its development is the same as that of children and adults.

For the right-to-life movement, then, human life is not only a good, it is the highest good, and it is always the highest good. The movement's strategic aim is to extend state power to preserve and protect every fetus that is conceived, regardless of the circumstances under which it is conceived, regardless of the condition of the fetus and regardless of the will of the fetus's parents.

The right-to-life movement has done our society a service by insisting upon the humanity and moral worth of the unborn child. But opponents of abortion have turned a legitimate moral concern into a moral absolute. They have made biological life not one good to be fought for, but the only good, to which all others must be subordinated. For this reason, anti-abortion activists insist that abortion be forbidden in cases of rape or incest: to suggest there are moral considerations other than those of the life of the fetus is to question the fundamental premises of the right-to-life movement.

One of those considerations is the creation and preservation of families. The pro-life movement is at odds with the assumptions of middle-class family formation. These families believe that the bearing and rearing of children is not an inexorable fate but a voluntary vocation, and that, like any other vocation, it is to be pursued methodically using the most effective means available. Such a conception of the family includes planning when children are to be born and how many are to be born. It seeks to increase the chances of successfully socializing and educating children in order to help them find fulfilling work and spiritual lives. The number of children is kept low in part because the amount of parental time and resources devoted to raising them is expected to be high.

This depiction of the middle-class family as a vocation borrows from the characterization of economic activity as a vocation in Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Weber argued that a key element in the rise of capitalism was a notion of economic activity as purposeful. This notion motivated those most active in capitalist economic activity, providing an alternative to traditional, fatalistic conceptions of economic life. Just as older patterns of economic traditionalism and fatalism persist within advanced industrial societies, fatalistic conceptions of family life remain as well, in which families are not consciously "made" but "happen" because fate has so decreed.

Declining fertility is universal among advanced industrial societies. Beginning in the European bourgeois family, fertility was consciously curtailed by contraception or abortion when the desired and limited number of children was reached. By the late nineteenth century, marriage in Europe was increasingly postponed until a decade or more after puberty, and one or another form of contraception allowed greater control over the timing and spacing of births.

The technological repertoire of today's family planning includes abortion to prevent out-of-wedlock childbirth, artificial contraception within marriage and voluntary sterilization when families have reached their desired size. This activist conception of family formation also suggests that artificial reproductive technology should be used to reverse infertility. Prenatal screening is part of the package: potential children known to carry debilitating diseases may be aborted to make possible the birth of children more likely to grow into healthy, productive adulthood. Given the assumptions of middle-class family formation, ignoring such technological possibilities can even be regarded as a form of child neglect.

This middle-class vision of the family is linked to other elements of modern life. It is a conception that those who seek to conserve modern society ought to fortify rather than undermine. It is under attack from many quarters, including the individualism and hedonism of much of our popular and elite culture and the emphasis on career advancement among both men and women. But it is also threatened from another direction by the right-to-life movement.

The struggle between the ideals of middle-class family formation and more fatalistic conceptions of family life is in part a struggle between groups in our society with divergent conceptions of rational, purposeful behavior. Members of the upper middle class are usually either the product of families with a rational, purposeful, planned view of domestic life or have adopted such behavior on their own. It is no coincidence that the Evangelical Protestant denominations that most vociferously oppose abortion draw disproportionately from the lower middle and working classes, emphasize faith as the antidote to fate and stress redemption through divine grace rather than through a lifetime of purposeful activity.

The ideology of middle-class family formation maintains that families are not just another lifestyle option but an essential part of a modern society. Illegitimacy is stigmatized because it is socially dysfunctional. Conservatives have long assumed that government should promote those social norms that encourage the creation of decent men and women and discourage those that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

experience has shown to be harmful. This logic lies at the heart of conservative debates on public policy, including recent proposals to reform welfare to discourage out-of-wedlock births.

The right-to-life movement stands as a barrier to such reform. The removal of government subsidies for the bearing of out-of-wedlock children, it is said, will create an incentive for pregnant teenagers and other pregnant unmarried women to resort more frequently to abortion. Though the claim is most often articulated by pro-life opponents of welfare reform, it is also an unarticulated premise of many who favor the elimination of welfare payments to unwed mothers.

Is it more important to minimize abortion or to minimize the birth of children to women who are unprepared to provide the familial structure needed for children to become stable and responsible adults? A growing consensus holds that unsocialized children are at the heart of our social deterioration, not only because they are more likely to engage in violent and criminal activity, but because they lack the discipline needed to learn in school and to function in the workplace. The socializing influence of the family—comprising husbands and wives in ongoing union and with a commitment to child-rearing—appears to be an essential element of any solution. If these assumptions are correct, as conservatives and many liberals now believe, the trade-off is more biological lives at the cost of more unsocialized children—making people versus making people moral.

Opposition to the elimination of welfare payments for out-of-wedlock children comes from two quarters: the pro-choice movement and the right-to-life movement. The former condemns "welfare caps" because they reduce the choices facing women, and all choices are to be protected. In the words of liberal feminist Iris Young, "A liberal society that claims to respect the autonomy of all its citizens equally should affirm the freedom of all citizens to bear and rear children, whether they are married or not, whether they have high incomes or not." For the right-to-life movement, of course, no fact about the potentially miserable outcome of the fetus's birth affects the imperative that it be born. Beginning from different commitments, therefore, feminists and pro-lifers converge in rejecting the conservative assumption that the troubling social effects of out-of-wedlock births justify government attempts to limit them.

The current right-to-life strategy calls for "chipping away" at the liberal abortion culture to "save" as many babies as possible under the political circumstances. Because pro-lifers can have the greatest impact on legislation affecting the poor, the socially marginal and those dependent on governmental funding for medical procedures, among their first targets have been, for example, Medicaid recipients. As a result, the success of the pro-life movement is now measured in the lives of poor children born out of wedlock. Most abortions in the U.S. occur to avoid the birth of children out of wedlock. Of the roughly 1.5 million abortions in 1991, only 271,000 were performed upon married women. Among married women, there were eight abortions for every ninety births; among unmarried women, there were forty-eight abortions for every forty-five births. All else being equal, then, eliminating the possibility of abortion would hike the number of out-of-wedlock births from its already disastrous level of 30 percent to 49 percent.

Indeed, the anti-abortion movement may already have helped increase the number of children born out of wedlock. The percentage of out-of-wedlock births in the United States rose from 18.4 percent in 1980 to 30.1 percent of all births in 1992, according to recent reports from the National Center for Health Statistics. During the same period, the proportion of non-marital pregnancies ending in abortion declined, from 60 percent in 1980 to 46 percent in 1991, and the abortion rate among unmarried women fell by 12 percent. Thirty percent of these mothers were teenagers. The statistics on all potential mothers aged 15 to 17, those least able to care adequately for their children, are more alarming still. In the years from 1986 to 1991 the pregnancy rate for this group rose by 7 percent, but the abortion rate dropped by 19 percent, so that the rate of out-of-wedlock births among these very young mothers increased by 27 percent. This trend toward out-of-wedlock births rather than abortion may be due either to the increased difficulty of obtaining abortions or to increased preference for carrying babies to term. Either way, it marks a partial victory for the pro-life movement.

The second thrust of the current right-to-life strategy is the prohibition of abortion late in pregnancy, on the plausible assumption that even those with doubts about prohibiting abortion entirely regard the fetus as subject to ever greater respect as it develops. Here, too, the effect is tragic. Late-term abortions are rare, and, when they do occur, it is frequently because the parents have discovered late that their prospective child suffers from a serious birth defect or malformation. Yet it is these fetuses whom the pro-life movement now aims to "save." A bill now before Congress tries to force women to give birth to such babies. Titled the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act by its sponsors, it would be better dubbed the Cruelty to Families Act.

The public is genuinely ambivalent on the question of abortion. It adheres to the tenets of middle-class family life, yet without hearing those tenets articulated. To focus on the conflict between the right-to-life movement and middle-class family values is to call into question the terms in which the abortion debate is usually cast in our political culture. The abortion struggle should be understood as a three-way debate: among liberals, who believe that to let each of us do as we like will work out for the best; pro-lifers, who cling to one ultimate good at the expense of all others; and those committed to conserving middle-class families, sometimes at the expense of "choice," sometimes at the expense of "life." The third group lays best claim to the title "conservative." •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Midsummer Roundup

The Net (Columbia). A thriller that, for a change, thrills—competently directed by Irwin Winkler, smartly edited by Richard Halsey. Its base is the Hitchcock trick: we are the only persons, besides the villains, who know that the protagonist is innocent, is telling the truth in incriminating circumstances. The drama is in the way the protagonist, against great odds, proves innocence.

But this screenplay by John Brancato and Michael Ferris is bold, original, a milestone. The protagonist is a woman. What's more, she's not just one half of a romance, with a male waiting for union with her at the end of a twisty trail. If ever there were a pop-film heroine *not* defined by men, she's the one.

She is played by Sandra Bullock—of *While You Were Sleeping*—who is so endearing that we almost feel family pride in her progress to stardom. She is ours. Little of her work so far demonstrates magnificent talent; but little stands in the way of her ascent. It looks as if audiences are going to have someone to cherish for a long time.

Bullock is here a computer program analyst in California who accidentally uncovers a computer scheme to take over economic and political power throughout the country. Well, at least it's a topical switch from Dr. No and other arch-fiends. Jeremy Northam, an English actor who has already done Hamlet and other classic roles, is incisive as a smooth menace.

Winkler indulges in a few clichés, like a sequence in an amusement park, but the action is generally brisk. A special nod to Mark Isham's music. His score even makes a change on a computer screen into a dramatic event.

The Usual Suspects (Gramercy). A counter-example—how not to make a thriller. This one has a plot so complex that we need a copy of the script to let us review some explanations. (Of which there are plenty.) And some of the dialogue is so chunky that it almost sticks in actors' throats. Chazz Palminteri, an actor whose ease is his chief asset, has some of the worst gobs to masticate.

Among the other lapses in this worn yarn of drug- and gem-smuggling is Gabriel Byrne's (usual) ineffectiveness in the leading role and Bryan Singer's sententious direction. Newton Thomas Sigel's arty cinematography helps to make this intended film noir a film blanc. Or blank.

I Can't Sleep (New Yorker). The French director Claire Denis made her debut with the memorable *Chocolat*, then made three films that were not shown here. Here is her fifth, and the opening sequence is terrific.

A police helicopter is flying over Paris. The pilot and co-pilot are laughing uncontrollably. We never find out what they're laughing at, and we never see those two policemen again. It's an opening roulade that suggests Truffaut, and ex post facto we can see that it may have been intended to suggest present-day deities looking down on mankind and finding the prospect hilarious.

The rest of the film, though slickly made, is not equally interesting. The screenplay, by Denis and Jean-Pol Fargeau, is based on a true story of a black drag queen who, with his white lover, murdered more than twenty elderly Paris women. *I Can't Sleep* doesn't explore the subject of murder as does *Sister My Sister*. We don't know a great deal more about these two men finally than we do about those helicopter cops.

The murder chronicle, which takes a while to emerge, is entwined with the drag queen's club life, his brother's difficulties with his white wife and the adventures of a newly arrived Lithuanian actress in Paris. She is played by the beautiful Katerina Golubeva, whose main task is to push her face around from scene to scene without expression.

Underlying this supposedly implicative story is facile Left Bankism. If a film shows us people in trouble, particularly impoverished people, most particularly people eccentric in our society, we are to understand that profundities have been engaged. *I Can't Sleep* is just one more exercise in laconic attitudinizing. Its only novelty is that it just presents its stuff, it doesn't investigate it.

Unzipped (Miramax). A documentary by Douglas Keeve about the New York fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi. Design and fashion shows have been a film theme at least since *Funny Face* (1957), most recently revived in Altman's *Ready to Wear*. As a subject, it isn't much more

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Bandit Queen. *Factually based. A modern Indian woman, after years of abuse, sexual and otherwise, heads a Robin Hood band. After a prison term, she enters politics. Sensational in several senses. (Reviewed 7/17&24/95)* **Jeffrey.** *A comedy—yes, comedy—about AIDS. A gay New York actor, frightened by the threat of disease, shuns sex, or tries to. Wittily written, directed and, for the most part, played. (7/21/95)* **Living in Oblivion.** *Tom Dicillo, a young director, wrote and directed this pungent account of the troubles encountered in making a low-budget feature. Lots of laughs, some slivers of insight. (8/21/95)* **My Life and Times with Antonin Artaud.** *His last two years as seen by a young poet. Sami Frey is haunting as Artaud, Gérard Mordillat directs like a surrealist poet. (8/14/95)*—**SK**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deeply investigated by *Unzipped*; but we have a good time meeting with people, especially Mizrahi himself. The account begins just after the relative failure of Mizrahi's Spring '94 collection and ends with his comeback—his Fall '94 collection. Mizrahi scurries, ponders, quarrels, embraces through it all without self-consciousness, with the flounce that is as essential in his life as modesty is in a nun. Conferences, trial designs, excitements, dejections, all contribute to a sense of his enjoyment of his work, in spite of—if not because of—its pressures.

As with all "eavesdropping" documentaries, this one depended largely on the director's ability to gain people's confidence, which means getting them to ignore the presence of the camera. Keeve did that very well here, and it makes *Unzipped* ... zippy.

An Awfully Big Adventure (Fine Line). The title comes from *Peter Pan*. Peter, facing danger, declares: "To die will be an awfully big adventure." Here, however, though there is a death, the story is about the discovery of life.

The center is a rep theater in Liverpool in the postwar years. A teenage girl gets a job doing backstage odd-jobs and soon falls into the pit of sentimentalities, sex and back-stabbings that constitute much of theater life. In the course of things, she is of course initiated in amour. The chief male involved, a leading actor with a boudoir track record, is shaken by the experience in an unpredictable, drastic way.

That actor is done by Alan Rickman, who is hired to double as Mr. Darling and Captain Hook in Barrie's play (a usual procedure). Rickman has reliable histrionics. Georgina Cates is OK as the generally perplexed girl. But the film, which was made before *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, was brought here because it has Hugh Grant as the director of the theater. Grant's supercilious performance—with monocle—is more interesting than his face-making in *Nine Months*; and his bit as Captain Hook (substituting for Rickman in an emergency) is savory.

The soundtrack should have been re-recorded: much of the dialogue is incomprehensible. Mike Newell, who subsequently directed *Four Weddings*, is more plodding here. But the real letdown is the cuteness-cum-surprise of the screenplay. A lot of this presumably comes from the Beryl Bainbridge novel that is its source; but it was adapted by Charles Wood, who didn't improve it. Wood wrote that forgotten gem *How I Won the War* and co-wrote the Beatles' *Help* and *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. The dialogue in those pictures crackled; here, when audible, the dialogue is at lending library level. •

Louis Armstrong, race and the power of song.

Pops Art

BY ALFRED APPEL JR.

Twenty-four years after his death, Louis Armstrong has become, in the strictest sense, an American classic, the only jazz musician who is securely in the canon, ensconced as firmly as Hemingway, Faulkner and Fitzgerald. (Duke Ellington is there as a composer.) An Armstrong commemorative stamp will be issued by the government in September. A vast Louis Armstrong Archives has been established at Queens College, the City University of New York. An exhibition called "Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy," organized by the Queens Museum and the Smithsonian Institution, is touring the country, and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., will be its final, signal installation next year. But the exhibition's subtitle is aptly ambiguous, for the nature of Armstrong's achievements is still elusive. He was at once a great musician and a great entertainer, which is a paradox to critics and curators who prefer to draw impermeable boundaries between "high" and "low."

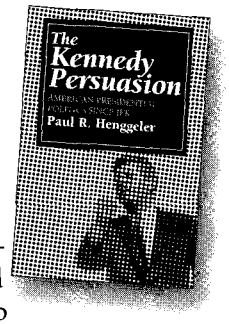
Since Armstrong is on the shelf with the canonical modernists, his accomplishments may seem clearer if we unabashedly consider him, with literary tacks in mind, as a musician whose radical art of the vernacular makes him, like Billie Holiday and Fats Waller, a "modernist," too. They partake of a major, if

ALFRED APPEL JR. is professor of English at Northwestern University. He is the author of *The Art of Celebration* (Knopf) and *The Annotated Lolita* (Vintage).

Worth your time

The Kennedy Persuasion

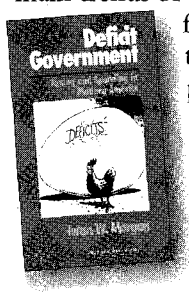
by PAUL R. HENGGELER



How Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, have invoked the Kennedy mythology, adopted the Kennedy strategy, even tried to summon up the Kennedy appearance to influence Congress, the media, and the electorate—and in the process demeaned the substance of American politics. "Meticulous and well-rendered...it draws history onto important ground." —Kirkus Reviews

Deficit Government

by IWAN W. MORGAN



A refreshingly clear analysis of the main trends of budget policy from the Roosevelt to the Clinton presidencies, written for the general reader. "A fine short volume...it could not have come at a better time." —Thomas Baldino, *Library Journal*

Ivan R. Dee, Publisher

At your bookseller, or order toll-free 1-800-634-0226 with a major credit card.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

somewhat odd, aspect of the modernist enterprise: the recycling, and the aesthetic transformation, of demotic materials, from regional tall tales and colloquial American English to shards of songs, newsprint, headlines and puns wrought from "found" materials.

"Song" is a central yet surprisingly problematic word in regard to the art of Armstrong. The recent tribute to Armstrong by the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra featured transcribed versions of his original solos that were played, by two alternating trumpeters, as respectfully as any Mozart program. But rarely does a trumpeter or anyone else in an Armstrong concert venture to sing like him, probably for the same reason that many critics and historians have downplayed or ignored his immensely influential singing: they regret or deplore its physical side (grinning, mugging, body English) as an embarrassment. Armstrong's singing, it is commonly believed, was an anachronistic extension of nineteenth-century minstrelsy's "darky entertainer."

At its worst, Armstrong's singing is a strained, theatrical attempt to project a genuine ebullience, exhaustion notwithstanding, particularly late in his career, when Armstrong's first million-selling record, *Hello Dolly*, released in 1963, his jazz-phrasing still intact, made his show-biz "compromise" seem complete. At its best, however, and that is most of the time, Armstrong's singing is a powerful musical and spiritual transformation of his circumstances, which were not his alone, and the expression of a unique sensibility.

"That's Why Darkies Were Born," a pseudo-spiritual sung fervently by Frank Munn (a white man) in the Broadway revue *George White's Scandals* of 1931, explains that "Some had to slave and be able to sing," which has the virtue of concision. If Munn were black, he might appreciate the fact that the song is in the third person, as opposed to the more demeaning first person, as was the case of the popular "Shine," which was written in 1924. "Shine" denotes a shoe-shine boy, and a shiny, ingratiating smile, and the vernacular verb, synonymous with Uncle Tomming, used by blacks only, as in, "no, I *ain't* shinin'." Colored boys of any age in the '20s, '30s and '40s might be called "shine," sometimes as benignly as all Pullman porters were called "George." And black performers of the day were routinely expected to sing songs such as "Shine," which is in the tradition of the nineteenth-century coon or minstrel song.

Armstrong recorded the song in 1931; the Mills Brothers, in 1932, with Bing Crosby, whose condescending patter goes with the territory; and Dooley Wilson sang it in *Casablanca* (1942). Although "Shine" offers one of Armstrong's most brilliant trumpet solos, it is omitted from the most ambitious Armstrong anthology, *Louis Armstrong/Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man/1923-1934*, a recent set of four compact discs from Columbia, containing eighty numbers, and this excision limns perfectly the custodial impulse to put Armstrong on a pedestal in a well-lit pristine space quite removed from the jungle of race and popular entertainment.

Armstrong's other rendition of "Shine," in a short feature film called *A Rhapsody in Black and Blue* (1932), is demeaning enough to symbolize the well-paid black performer's plight and challenge in the '30s. There are two stills from the film in the excellent, profusely illustrated catalog of *Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy* (edited by Marc H. Miller and published by the Queens Museum and University of Washington Press), and an excerpt from the movie is included in the superb 1988 video *Satchmo*, still available. A lazy black man has been knocked out by his wife and now dreams of himself as emperor of the jungle court of Jazzmania, where none other than Armstrong himself, dressed in a (royal?) leopard skin, plays and sings "Shine" while standing amid great bubbling soap suds where one might expect studio-spun clouds—a "joke," perhaps, about floor-scrubbing and Negro domestic service in general.

Courtesy Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

LOUIS ARMSTRONG, 1931

Stableboy Armstrong sings "Jeepers Creepers" to a horse in *Going Places* (1938), which may be preferable to Bill (Bojangles) Robinson's turn as Shirley Temple's butler in *The Little Colonel* (1935), since horses can't give orders. And the great Nicholas Brothers appeared briefly as dancing redcaps or porters in more than one movie. This "cultural legacy" is heavy baggage indeed. In 1971, the year of his death, between performances at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, his final engagement, Armstrong recalled gravely what it was like in 1933, "in Oklahoma, with $2,000 in my pocket and nowhere to eat."

Armstrong's greatness as a man and an artist is predicated on the way he juggled this "legacy" and slipped the yoke of show business Negritude and the cult of the primitive, which was an international force in "high" art as well as "low" art. (It was well glossed by Rodgers and Hart's 1937 song, "All Dark People Are Light on Their Feet.") When Armstrong and his good friend Thomas (Fats) Waller, another technically infallible player, starred in the 1929 all-colored Broadway revue *Hot Chocolates* (music by Waller, lyrics by Andy Razaf and Harry Brooks), their talents were in no way compromised by their acceptance of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conventional rubric "chocolates." This was the epoch, after all, when Joe Louis was known as "The Brown Bomber," which didn't affect his dignity at all. As performers, Armstrong and Waller were persons of joy, whose goal, as Armstrong once said, was "to make people happy." Who could ask for anything more? (The answer is: Miles Davis, who insisted on much less, and tried to reject the Waller-Armstrong lode in the '50s and '60s by affecting a mask of indifference—ostentatious introversion as a statement of radical racial pride.)

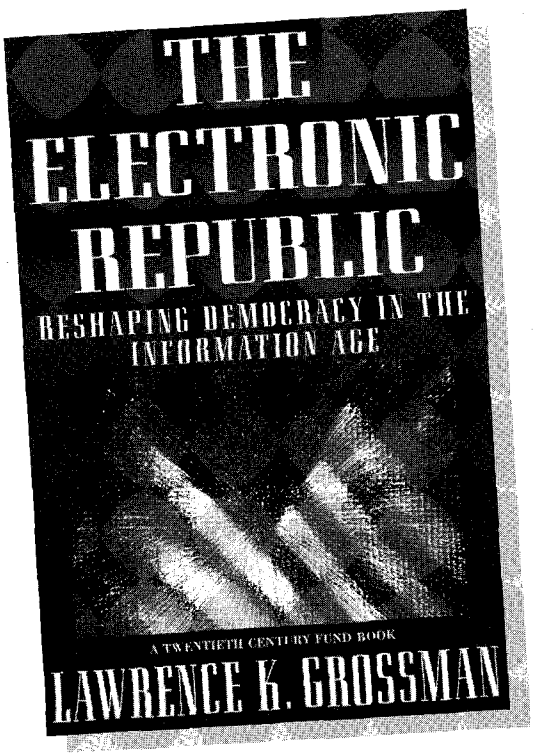
As extroverted singers who offered discursive material, and still believed that words convey meaning, Armstrong and Waller present striking, instructive contrasts. Armstrong the trouper usually did the best he could with silly, dubious or offensive lyrics, though sometimes, like the Elizabethan clown, he used his persona of joy to take splendid liberties. "I'm a ding dong daddy from Dumas / And you oughta see me do my stuff," he sings in 1931. After warbling another silly line, he suddenly croaks: "Oh, uh, umm [sounds to that effect, verbal treading of water], and I done forgot the words!" This he confesses with more glee than guilt. Did his listeners understand that Armstrong was declaring the song dumb? Does this constitute cultural criticism of (white) Tin Pan Alley's hold on America?

Waller never leaves us in doubt on either count. Stupid or mediocre songs—he recorded hundreds—are sent-up by various means: sarcastic or falsetto delivery of some or all of the lyrics; fulsome humming; heavy sighs; mock-gospel-meeting exhortations; Bronx cheers; interjections in perfect Oxford or West Indian-inflected English; ad-libbed punch lines, some of them hilarious, at the very end of a number; and outrageous sound effects. At the conclusion of "Spring Cleaning (Getting Ready for Love)" (1936), he convincingly imitates a raucous vacuum cleaner being revved up. The machine faces a daunting challenge if it hopes to suck in the bits and pieces of all the songs that Waller has decimated. As "literary" turns, Waller's caprices and parodies are implicitly moral acts of character, the domain of traditional satire. No wonder so many writers admired and loved him. (Eudora Welty's *Powerhouse*, perhaps the best story about jazz, was written in 1941 after she saw Waller perform.) Imagine the effect if a contemporary gangsta rap singer ended his number by saying, in a prissy, professorial voice, "Now wasn't that nihilistic, misogynist cant?" That would be pure Fats Waller.

Armstrong is most Waller-like in "The Lonesome Road" (1931), a pseudo-spiritual in which he directs an almost anarchic verbal vaudeville at the expense of "his" down-home ministry. Armstrong plays a money-hungry preacher, the band his voluble congregation. While Reverend Armstrong makes the weekly collection, to meager results, he moans, "What kind of a church is this, what kind of church?" "Two dollars more would have got my shoes out of pawn," he whines, "but nevertheless I'm in love with you." This sort of patter has long been criticized for perpetuating caricatured Negro "types," though "types" sometimes do capture truths, a troublesome truth to consider, then or now. But Armstrong's reverend is dead-on satire if you forget race and only remember the TV evangelists of the '80s. Armstrong's "I'm in love with you"—instead of "God loves you" or "I love you"—is a brilliant modulation, Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker before the fact. "Editor" Armstrong jettisons the shallow "sacred" lyrics of "The Lonesome Road" in favor of his own ad-lib ensemble clowning and the fulsome humming by the reverend's "choir," and his trumpet solo is the only dignified voice in the proceedings: a Waller production sans Waller.

Born and raised by respectable parents in New York City, Waller gave very short shrift to any racist or racialist songs that he was obliged to record.

What are the *Political* Consequences of the Media Age?


THE ELECTRONIC REPUBLIC
RESHAPING DEMOCRACY IN THE INFORMATION AGE
A TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND BOOK
LAWRENCE K. GROSSMAN

"What will be the fall-out. . .when our traditional form of democratic government. . . is exploded by today's instant, interactive telecommunications?

Grossman's answers to that timely question are enlightened, enlightening, and thought-provoking."
—Grant A. Tinker, Former Chairman and CEO of NBC

"Larry Grossman is one of the most experienced, thoughtful leaders in broadcasting and he has written a superb book."
—David McCullough, author of *Truman*

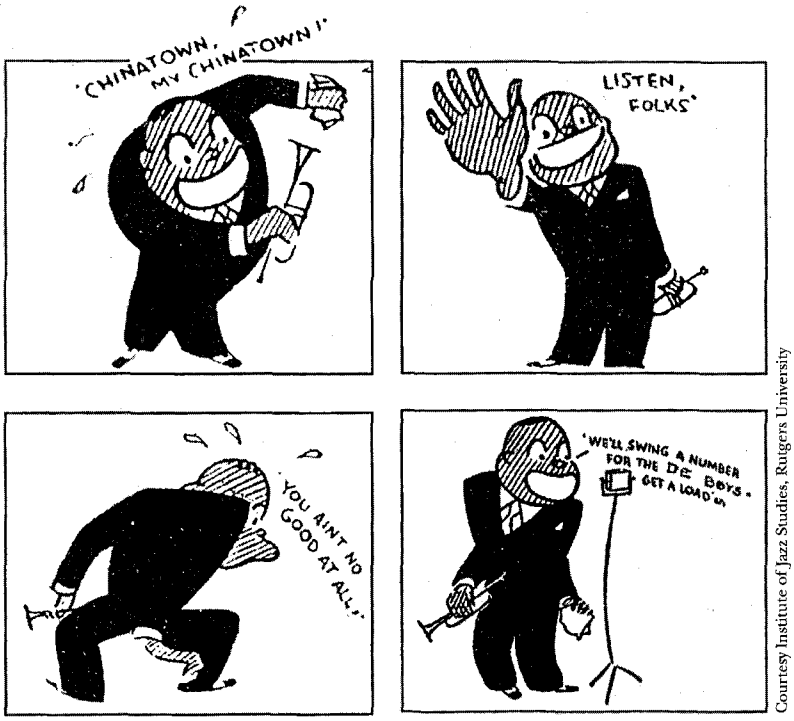
At Bookstores Now from Viking

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The demise of "Old Plantation" (1937), a Stephen Foster-like exercise in antebellum nostalgia (*Gone With the Wind* was a current best-seller) is telegraphed by Waller's facetious mispronunciation of one word. "There's an old plantation in the *boot-eee-ful* South," he sings with deadpan sincerity. "Yes, there's an old cabin" he's really longing to see. "Yessss," he croons fulsomely at the end (he actually had a good voice), adding his own commanding coda, "Drop that plow," at which point the genre scene is suddenly drained of color. (Pun intended.)

Armstrong's recording of "Shine" follows a similar, more complicated course—a surprising claim, perhaps, since the winsome or impassioned sincerity of Armstrong's singing (he was a superb actor) could, like Billie Holiday's, transform and dignify seemingly unworthy subjects or lyrics, as in "Sleepy Time Down South" (1931), another plantation number, whose highly colored stock images ("banjoes ringing," "mammies singing," "steamboats splashing," "soft winds blowing through the pinewood trees") cumulatively emit a rich, primary glow, as in a folk painting—the vernacular strain of pastoral landscape, offering comforting images of harmony and felicity. Aglow, too, is "Lawd, You Made the Night too Long" (1932), a pseudo-spiritual which begins with Armstrong declaiming a loud, churchly "Hallelujah" that is as serious as the song's metaphorical lyrics, "I got a heart / I got a cabin / The door is wide open." This cabin is located nowhere near Waller's contemptible "old cabin." Thanks to Armstrong's throbbing delivery of the lyric, we accept the prosaic metaphor as the truth about his loving, open nature. He was known as "Pops," not as "Satchmo," to musicians everywhere.

In "Just a Gigolo" (1931), Armstrong must sing the dirge of a gigolo who confronts mortality. But the lyrics actually don't sound as maudlin as they look on the page, because Armstrong, who was born out of wedlock and grew up in the roughest neighborhood of New Orleans (his first wife had been a prostitute), shows his natural affinity and sympathy for night people. He expresses his open cabin door policy in "Just a Gigolo" with a poignant muted trumpet solo that respects the melody completely, every note of it, and breaks your heart. Dare one say that anymore? (Miles Davis's muted "Bye Bye Blackbird" solo of 1956 has the same effect. A son of Pops, after all.) "There will come a day," sings Armstrong, "Youth will pass away ... [and] when the end comes, I know," Armstrong concludes, "They'll say 'Just another *jig* I know' / And life goes on without me." Although the ad-libbed racial pun ("jig" for "jigaboo," synonymous with "nigger") may not rank with Joycean wordplay, its depth of feeling takes no back seat to any expressive efforts, "high" or "low." "Things is tough *all* over!" Waller might have cracked at this juncture, asserting his literary and urban cool; but Waller rarely played the blues, and when he did play the blues, like several other great Northern-born Negro pianists (James P. Johnson of Brunswick, New Jersey, Earl Hines of Pittsburgh, Art Tatum of Toledo), he didn't do it well.



ARMSTRONG AT THE LONDON PALLADIUM, 1932, FROM *MELODY MAKER*

Courtesy Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University

Recorded at the same session as "Just a Gigolo," Armstrong's "Shine" *is* Joycean. Before any close discussion of it, however, "Shine" must be placed in the context of Armstrong's recordings of the early '30s. By 1931, Armstrong was a megastar, as we say now, performing and recording arrangements that featured him as a singer and a virtuosic soloist backed by big bands, a departure from the small group performances of 1925-28 that are usually (and wrongly) said to be the peak of his art. Armstrong now turned from his black jazz/blues repertoire to pop songs, and his masterful recordings of compositions that were not yet standards (some had just been written) bespeaks the excellent taste and intelligence of a musician rather than the intuitions of a primitive genius.

The songs, from 1930-31 alone, include George Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm," Harold Arlen's "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea," Johnny Green's "Body and Soul," Jimmy McHugh's "Exactly Like You" and "On the Sunny Side of the Street," and Hoagy Carmichael's "Star Dust," "Rockin' Chair" and "Georgia On My Mind." All of these grand songs are by white men: not a minor point, given the segregated circumstances of jazz as well as society at large. When Armstrong quotes from Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (1925), a work that was only four years old, in his trumpet solo on the Waller-Razaf song "Ain't Misbehavin' " (Armstrong's nightly showstopper in *Hot Chocolates*), the transparent allusion at once posits racial integration and Armstrong's ambition to build bridges through music—a worn metaphor to suit the unpretentiousness of the man, who was anything but naïve when it came to the business of communication.

To compensate for the more formal, mainstream and "multicultural" aspects of his new music, the Armstrong of 1930-33 engaged in a calculated and unique effort to narrow the psychic distance between himself and his home listeners, who now included more white people than ever before as well as black folks who had to be kept in the fold. "Now ladies and gentlemen, we have a little novelty for you this evening," he says to his invisible audience at the outset of two recordings ("Chinatown, My Chinatown" in 1931 and "The New Tiger Rag" in 1932). He tries to keep blacks in the fold by occasionally employing their secret vocabulary. "Get a load of this viper's language," he says in "Sweet Sue, Just You" (1933), as he and Bud Johnson are about to sing some charming nonsense. A "viper" was a marijuana smoker—Armstrong was an avid lifelong inhaler—and the delirious singing "documents" their "high." Armstrong and his black listeners knew that few whites would understand this jive, the joke's on them, can you keep a secret?

Now we're side by side with Arm-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

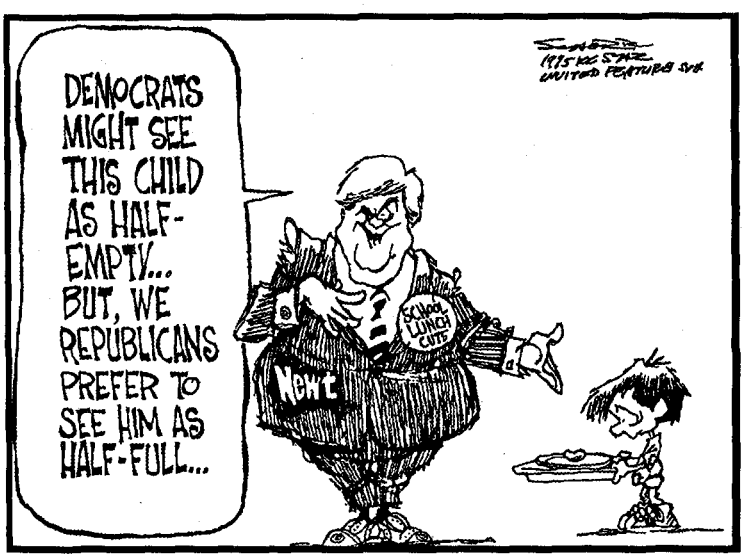
strong, walking on some Northern city street at the outset of his first recording of "Sleepy Time Down South." "There's a guy comin' up the street look like he's from my home town," he tells us. "Look like ol' Charlie Alexander, man. Why I believe it is! What you say, gate?" "What you say, Dipper?" Armstrong: "How long you been up here, boy?" "Oh, I been up here about a year-and-a-half." Armstrong: " ... Man, I been up here a long time myself.... I'm going back home.... I'm going, gettin' some of them red beans and [do you] ... remember them sweet potatoes?" Elevated by a subtle African American union—the beat of their speech and the Hemingwayesque repetition of "been up here"—Armstrong's nostalgia personalizes and vivifies the threadbare vernacular lyrics and drives the song home. The spoken introduction is omitted from Armstrong's many subsequent recordings of the number, which became his theme song, and was written, as it happens, by two Creoles.

"Now we're gonna take you all the way down to New Orleans, my home town ... for one of those street parades," he announces at the start of "High Society" (1933), solid information for new (white?) listeners unfamiliar with this New Orleans jazz warhorse. "Look out!" Armstrong warns. His marching band is ready to roll and can't be expected to make sudden stops if a small child darts in front of them. Armstrong asks the listeners at home to build on its visual and visceral sense of him, grinning or grimacing, and to eavesdrop on the bandstand as he talks comprehensible jive to the cats in the band: "So get your chops together, boys, while we mug lightly, slightly and politely," he says in "Chinatown, My Chinatown." (Waller's verbal interjections don't draw us in this way; it's enough if we join the fun, wherever we're seated.)

Armstrong verbally kicks off the tempo—"one, two!"—on several numbers, including two superb Harold Arlen songs, "I've Got the World on a String" (1933) and "I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues" (1933). "Look like they're after me!" he says with mock fearfulness of the riffing, surging saxophone section. He introduces us to the members of the band by name, sometimes saying what town they're from. He offers precise musical instructions—"Bring it out, bring it out, sax-oh-*phones*!" He encourages the band—"Charlie Alexander, swing out on them ivories, boy!"—and comments on their playing—"Beautiful!" "Oh!" "Uh, *huh*!" "Way down, way down!"—and he is in turn exhorted by one of them: "Take off, gate!" You are there.

"Boy, am I riffin' this evenin' ," Armstrong says in the midst of a solo, and the old-fashioned single microphone set-up probably would not have picked this up for a "live" audience. "What's the matter with you, boy?" he says, about to sing Harold Arlen. "Don't you know I gotta right to sing the blues?" We are privileged to hear these asides because we seem to have some kind of miraculous access to Armstrong's space; and the procedure is analogous to the ways in which Joyce or Faulkner take us into extraordinary corners of consciousness. "Ain't that right, little trumpet? Say '*yes sir*!' Oh, that little devil," Armstrong chuckles in "Chinatown, My Chinatown," trying to bring his horn to life for us. Armstrong wants his live music to enter our living room, our reality, in the deepest sense. A young audiophile of 1995, dwelling in his or her multimedia paradise, doesn't know that sixty years ago a recording artist's ten-inch two-sided 78 rpm shellac discs were issued singly every two or three months and once purchased (this was the era of the Great Depression) they became the center of a kind of attention and concentration without equal today.

"Shine," which draws strength from the collective intimacy of these recordings, becomes quite powerful if you



NEWT, TELL IT LIKE IT IS!

In the absence of such a miracle there *is* Liberal Opinion Week. Each week *Liberal Opinion Week* brings you 32 pages of fact, opinion and thought - provoking commentary from more than 60 of the nation's most respected syndicated columnists and cartoonists —with no advertising.

The election is coming.
In the meantime, there's *Liberal Opinion Week*.

To order call: 1-800-338-9335
or Fax: 319-472-4811

SPECIAL OFFER: 13 Weekly Issues for $10.50

FEATURED COLUMNISTS—EVERY COLUMN,EVERY WORD
Betty liu Ebron, Molly Ivins, Mary McGrory, Richard Cohen, Jesse Jackson, Calvin Trillin, Lars-Erik Nelson, Deb Price, Linda Ellerbee, Dave Barry, David Broder, David Nyhan, Neal Peirce, Art Buchwald, Russell Baker, Ralph Nader, Nat Hentoff, Clarence Page, Ellen Goodman, Anna Quindlen, Mark Shields, Cynthia Tucker, Anderson & Binstein, Cohen & Solomon, Tony Kornheiser, Alexander Cockburn, James Hoagland

CONTRIBUTING COLUMNISTS—SELECTED COLUMNS WEEKLY, IN FULL
Les Payne, Donald Kaul, Andy Rooney, Colman McCarthy, Mark Russell, Robert Reno, Anthony Lewis, Gemond & Witcover, Christopher Mathews, William Pfaff, Carl Rowan, Murray Kempton, William Raspberry, Jimmy Breslin, Roger Simon, Mike Royko

CONTRIBUTING CARTOONISTS
Jules Feiffer, 'Herblock', Duane Powell, Tom Toles, Dan Wasserman, Steve Sack, Doug Marlette, Jim Borgman, Mike Luckovich, Mike Peters, Taylor Jones, Ted Rall, Paul Szep, Jeff Danziger, Tom Tomorrow, Paul Conrad, Eleanor Mill, Bill Schorr, Rob Rogers, Joe Sharpnack

LIBERAL OPINION WEEK P.O. Box 468, Vinton, Ia 52349

☐ Send a 13-week introductory subscription for $10.50
☐ One-year subscription (52 weekly issusues) for $42.00
☐ Check enclosed ☐ VISA ☐ M.C. ☐ Bill Me
Card# _____ Exp. _____
Name _____
Address _____ Apt. _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
(Foreign postage add $25.00, $6.50 for 13-week offer.) B

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"read" it as Act II, if you will, in a dramatic two-sided rejection of "Just another jig I know," akin to Armstrong's 1929 rescue of the uncharacteristic Waller-Razaf "Black and Blue." Armstrong turned the latter song into a stirring "protest" song by dropping the verse as first sung and recorded by Edith Wilson in *Hot Chocolates*, in which she moans that her dark complexion costs her lovers: "Brown and yellows / All have fellows / Gentlemen prefer them light," a significant echo of Anita Loos's famous 1925 title. Armstrong's "editing" buried this verse forever. It's *his* version of "Black and Blue" that the narrator of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* carries with him when he goes underground.

Armstrong's regressive and deathly use of "jig" in the penultimate line of "Just a Gigolo" (it is offered as an epitaph) verbally concludes the first side of the original 78 rpm record, backed by "Shine," whose egregious lyrics seem to be a logical and awful extension of the self-abnegation of the one pejorative word "jig." (The two songs have been paired successively this way in systematic Armstrong reissues over the years, including the easily available *Louis Armstrong, Volume 7: You're Driving Me Crazy*, on Columbia, which also includes several of the other numbers mentioned here.) The vocal on "Shine" is never discussed by critics, but it deserves a closer look or listen.

Armstrong's vocal on "Shine"—the music and lyrics are by Ford Dabney and Cecil Mark (a.k.a. Richard McPherson), well-educated Negroes with excellent musical credentials, not least Dabney's membership in the elite Clef Club—evolves in three stages. First, the lyrics are sung complete, Armstrong as the shine: "'Cause my hair is curly / Just because my teeth are pearly / Just because I always wear a smile," sings Armstrong. "Smile," obviously, is the signal word, but the perfect grammar is a surprising element that seems to save the performer from total caricature, now more than ever given our sociopolitical sensitivities. Respected Negro poets of the time, such as Paul Laurence Dunbar and Langston Hughes, both of whom used dialect freely, would have revised the lyric: "Just because my teeth is pearly" is accurate, and "wear" needs an "s." ("I bought a new hat, sho is fine, but I wish I had back that old gal o' mine." Amos 'n' Andy? No, Langston Hughes, from his poem "Dressed Up.") The well-spoken shine of Dabney and Mack's song is, on second thought, very strange, a kind of schizophrenic construct and amalgam which projects another angle of W.E.B. Du Bois's famous theory of Negro "double consciousness," the paradoxical literate/illiterate "bilingual" mentalities that he discussed in *The Souls of Black Folk*.

"I take troubles with a smile," Armstrong concludes. His (or the shine's) grammar is still as firm as a Tuskeegee man's. "Just because my color is shady / Mmm, different maybe / That's why they call me—" But instead of intoning the racist title epithet "shine," Armstrong substitutes scat jabberwocky (though not in the film version of the number). He traduces the song with a nonsense lingo that turns out to make perfect ethical sense.

In the second stage of the song, the only intelligible phrases include "hair is curly" and "teeth are pearly." Armstrong's scat attack bounces the phrases around like grotesquely sprung eyeballs in some of Picasso's drawings of the '30s, like flying body parts and vectors in comic-strip brawls and Tex Avery's animated cartoons of the '40s. (Cartoons of Armstrong and Waller, together as angels, appear in *Clean Pastures* in 1937, a cartoon that parodies Marc Connelly's *Green Pastures*, a popular, all-colored play of 1930 about the Bible and heaven, which was followed by a 1936 film.) The third intelligible isolated phrase, "Just because," introduces the song's third and most radical vocal phase: pure scat. And this rejects the possibility that there are any just or justifiable "becauses" in regard to the racial stereotyping of the song or the culture that fosters it, black songwriters included.

Thus, the lyrics of "Shine" have been deconstructed or, if you prefer, destroyed. The scat interlude concludes with the complete line "That's why they call me *shine*," the offensive word restored and emphasized as the target, really, of Armstrong's concluding trumpet solo, an assault that features a perfectly played half-valve glissando during which the tempo halts momentarily, and Armstrong is suddenly like a great heavyweight boxer—Joe Louis against Max Schmeling—who has cornered his opponent and is now setting him up for the knockout crescendo, a brilliant ascending run whose fast, high, full-bodied clarion blows do the trick. "Mercy! Stop that fight!" Fats Waller would have shouted if he had been at the piano accompanying his friend on this recording. At least one coon song has bit the dust. The jig is up. The Negro lower class, represented here by Armstrong, has leveled the dicty (black idiom for "snobbish," "very proper," "hypocritical") Negro middle class, represented here by the composers of "Shine," or what's left of it. Bring in Waller's vacuum cleaner.

Armstrong's send-up of "Shine" represents a sharp irony, inasmuch as "primitive" (non-verbal or pre-verbal) vocalizing has been able to dispatch "civilized" (verbal) discourse. Armstrong the singer moves in the same direction in his 1931 recording of the most popular American ballad, Hoagy Carmichael's "Star Dust." Composed as a brisk piano rag inspired by Bix Biederbecke's cornet style, "Star Dust" didn't receive lyrics for four years, and Armstrong's vocal underscores the vacuity of Mitchell Parish's very purple words. (Carmichael recorded "Star Dust" six times over the years but sang the lyrics only once.) "You're in my arms," declares the song, "The nightingale told its fairy tale / Of paradise where roses grew," which is either a "poetic" evocation of orgasm or nothing. Armstrong states in effect that it's nothing. He drops his voice when delivering "roses grew," as if to say that these flowers are dead.

Armstrong's earthy "Star Dust" eroticizes Parish's euphemistic, chaste lyrics with an amusing and stirring series of grunts, groans, muffled words, elided phrases, and a discernible "mama" and "oh, *baby*." (Lee Morgan brilliantly transferred this tumbling vocal gaiety to his bebop trumpet in the '60s, a rare feat, especially in jazz's most bitter decade.) "*Ooo, ooo, ooo*, what a little moonlight can do-oo," sings Armstrong's best student, Billie Holiday, age 20, vivifying the trashy "What a Little Moonlight Can Do" (1935), formulating, too, the continuum, the cultural *and* musical legacy of Armstrong, no museum in sight. And Holiday's intense, medium-tempo delivery of Gershwin's "Summertime" (1936), her early recording from *Porgy and Bess* (1935), which had just failed on Broadway, still stands in its heat alone, as a great but not crude celebration of carnal vitality, Armstrong's rhythmic style serving the statuesque young woman, once removed, in the person of Bunny Berigan, the greatest Armstrong-influenced white trumpeter, who opens the record with a deep-down, growly call to arms.

Colored gals could sing as they wished, since they were only a threat to the competition, other women. But Armstrong's entirely straightforward versions of love ballads such as "If I Could Be With You" (1930) are *not* eroticized. Armstrong's most intense and moving romantic singing of 1930-31 concerns melancholy ("Memories of You," "When Your Lover Has Gone"), submissiveness ("I Surrender Dear")

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and rejection ("Blue Again") rather than courtship or pursuit, which saves his skin, as it were, as a commercial property, since the wrong kind of female-directed gaze from a colored man could end in a lynching. Many insecure young white men preferred Bing Crosby to Frank Sinatra in the '40s because the lethargic, middle-aged Crosby didn't represent any competition, any implied sexual threat to your date or sweetheart. Armstrong's slurring and blurring of the words to the provocative "All of Me" in 1931 protectively neutralize (or neuter) him as an imaginable sexual rival without altogether extinguishing the spirit of Eros.

"Primitive" vocalisms in Armstrong's "All of Me" soften sharp body angles, but he sings the lyrics with a proverbial—grammatical, really—wink. "Take my arm, I'll never use them," he promises slyly, which leaves one or two appendages unaccounted for and at the ready. "Oh, you dog!" laughs a momentarily guttural and self-reflexive Armstrong in the middle of a jabberwocky scat on Carmichael's bland, pastoral lyrics to "Lazy River," as if Armstrong were saying that he's lucky they can't translate his riffin' on this one. "Lazy River" was a safe song to eroticize, since it is not a love ballad.

Scat, which some scholars trace back to Africa and age-old incantatory moans and grunts, may have served Armstrong as a private language. On second thought, however, Carmichael's line "Up a lazy river" has great potential. "Oh, you *rascal*, you *dog*!" chortles Armstrong during another incomprehensible, "muzzled" scat chorus. Armstrong, who often seems to be singing in a (viper's?) trance, ends his "Lazy River" scat with comprehensible words whose rhythmically subtle flow defies punctuation when transcribed: "Up a lazy river *mmm* river oh you river oh you dog! oh you *river*! Look out, Charlie Alexander," he says, surfacing from his body of water (Alexander's piano briefly sounds).

Armstrong's prudence and good taste have prevailed, barely. Bessie Smith, singing the blues on a "race" record (for coloreds only), calls for her "deep sea diver." Although Fats Waller can't be accused of always maintaining good taste, he knew that in such matters sometimes it's better to stop short. "Turn out de lights and call de law!" he shouts around 1940 when his band—"The Rhythm" was it's primal name—is really cookin' and he fears that they'll ignite too many fires. The dialectical turns parody the ol' darky entertainer's self-protective mask. A police siren actually sounds on the record—an avant-garde touch before the advance.

By the 1950s, *his* 1950s, Armstrong was fervently singing love songs from the perspective of banked fires. At the same time, the cautious Nat (King) Cole was directly addressing a dead white woman of good family ("Mona Lisa," the number-one hit of 1950) and the baritone Billy Eckstine, the "breakthrough" black balladeer, was crooning to seduce your grandma. Most memorable are Armstrong's "(Give Me) A Kiss to Build a Dream On" ("and my imagination will do rest," he sings); "Blueberry Hill" ("I'll bring my horn with me," Armstrong warbles confidently of an imagined reunion with his Eve of long ago); and "La Vie en Rose," in English, whose unembarrassed, open expressiveness and untranslatable optimism ("we'll have la vie en rose," he concludes) are even more affecting and impressive now, especially to aging Armstrong devotees who were then a permanent eighteen or nineteen, dancing cheek-to-cheek to Frank Sinatra LPs and such Billy Eckstine hits as "I Wanna Be Loved" (1950), our civil rights move, a song that Armstrong would have had to translate into total scat back in 1931, or sing in falsetto, wearing a mask and a woman's wig.

Carmichael's "Star Dust" ends with the line "The memory of love's refrain," a lyric much beloved and belabored by crooners, repeated twice by Bing Crosby in his 1931 version and three times by Frank Sinatra in his 1940 recording with Tommy Dorsey's big band. But who wants to remember "love's refrain"? And what exactly *is* "love's refrain"? Armstrong drops the entire line, a daring liberty, and substitutes "Oh, memory, oh, memory, oh, memory": a plangent apostrophe to the listener to remember his or her own emotions and sensations, which may well be beyond words, certainly beyond Mitchell Parish's words. Here we hit the divide that supposedly separates high and low culture and confront nothing less than the limitations of language. (James Joyce was dissatisfied enough with English to invent an open-ended punning language for *Finnegan's Wake*, where anything and everything and hundreds of American songs are included.) The Irving Berlin Wall has fallen.

The anonymous publicist who advertised Armstrong, in 1932, as "Master of Modernism," probably didn't grasp the accuracy of the tag. "Shine" and "Star Dust" and many other Armstrong numbers embody serious joys. But you don't have to wax too serious to pinpoint Armstrong's necessary place in our culture and on our record shelves, within easy

A History of Music of the Western World, 1100-1980

A 12-Cassette Program

"...Condenses a vast subject into a concise and appealing format that stimulates the mind and whets the appetite for music." Cleveland Plain Dealer

This is for anyone who likes music and would like to know more about it. Hundreds of musical examples are combined with explanatory comments by 15 prominent musical authorities. The stimulating discussions are richly illustrated with authentic musical examples, spanning eight centuries, performed by major international orchestras and chamber groups.

This comprehensive 12-cassette program is only $89.50 postpaid, with full money-back guarantee. Handsomely packaged, it makes a great gift. To order call toll-free 1-800-243-1234, Fax to (203) 453-9774, or write:

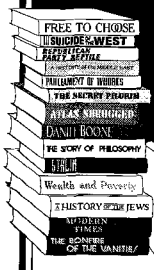
Audio-Forum, Room E819, 96 Broad St., Guilford, CT 06437

Bargain Books

- Save up to 80% on recent overstocks, remainders, imports from all major publishers. Books once priced at $20, $30, $40—now only $3.95, $4.95, $5.95.
- Choose from thousands of titles including hundreds of new arrivals each month!
- Over 40 subject areas: **Politics**, Biography, History, Fiction, Travel, the Arts, Nature, more.

Free Catalog

HAMILTON Box 15-146 Falls Village CT 06031



AUDIO BOOKS

- *Rentals by mail*
- *All Unabridged*
- *Huge Selection*
- *100% Guarantee*

BLACKSTONE AUDIO BOOKS
Dept. NE • P.O. Box 969 • Ashland OR 97520

For a **FREE** Catalogue, Write or Call:

1-800-729-2665

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reach in the event of the blues. Listen to "The Peanut Vendor" (1931). It is a one-chord piece whose lyrics are too stupid for words, and so Armstrong skips his trumpet solo and blissfully scats two choruses over a rhumba beat, castanets clacking, calling out "Marie, Marie" from time to time, mysteriously, stretching and bending the two syllables of her name—"Ma-*ree*, Ma-*reeee*!" (vibrato on the second syllable)—as he swings lightly and loosely and carries us toward felicity. "Who is she, Pops?" asks a spectral Fats Waller, widening and rolling his eyes. "Brother Waller, and members of the congregation, that is my sister!" answers Armstrong, indignantly, and their laughter rocks the room. "Rhythm Saved the World" is the title of an Armstrong number of 1936, and in its way, every time you play one of Armstrong's records, it does. •

Selling Children

BY CASS R. SUNSTEIN

Abandoned in the Wasteland: Children, Television, and the First Amendment by Newton N. Minow and Craig L. LaMay

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 237 pp., $20)

When Senator Dole criticized Hollywood for producing "nightmares of depravity," was he speaking for many Americans, or for a narrow far-right fringe? Recent polls strongly suggest the former. Over 80 percent of Americans want warning labels on records. Over 80 percent favor voluntary self-restraint by entertainment companies; two of every three Americans favor more restrictions on what is shown on television; slightly fewer, but a strong majority, say that they would favor more restrictions on movies and on lyrics of popular music. Over 70 percent agree with Senator Dole.

How do these results fit with American traditions, and in particular with the tradition of support for a free popular culture? Historically, Americans have alternated between two pictures of the mass media. The first is based on the metaphor of an unrestricted marketplace. If people want silly situation comedies, or violent programs, or bizarre talk shows, or discussion of sensationalistic sex scandals, then that is what they should get. Marketplace thinking has foundations in the great free speech opinions of Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. ("the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market"), but it finds its most vivid image in the words of Mark Fowler, the head of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) under President Reagan: "Television is just another appliance.... It's a toaster with pictures." The Federal Communications Act requires the FCC to regulate in the public interest; but for marketplace enthusiasts the public interest is whatever interests the public.

The marketplace model competes with a different understanding, with roots in the writing of James Madison, the principal thinker behind the First Amendment. For Madison, that amendment is about public deliberation and democratic self-government, not about unrestrained economic markets. In complaining about the Sedition Act on constitutional grounds, Madison did not quote Adam Smith or anticipate Milton Friedman. Instead he emphasized the placement of political sovereignty in the people:

> [T]he right of electing the members of the Government constitutes ... the essence of a free and responsible government. The value and efficacy of this right depends on the knowledge of the comparative merits and demerits of the candidates for public trust, and on the equal freedom, consequently, of examining and discussing the merits and demerits of the candidates respectively.

On this view, the First Amendment is associated with public discussion about public issues. It has educational and aspirational functions. Thus Justice Brandeis, the leading judicial exponent of the Madisonian view, wrote—in words altogether foreign to marketplace thinking—that "the greatest menace to freedom is an inert people" and that "public discussion is a political duty." Thus Alexander Meiklejohn, the most influential twentieth-century philosopher of free speech, explicitly linked the First Amendment with democratic self-governance and insisted that the First Amendment "does not intend to guarantee men freedom to say what some private interest pays them to say for its own advantage." If the marketplace fails to serve democratic aspirations, good Madisonians think that correctives are in order. Through much of its history, the FCC has had Madisonian aspirations, as reflected above all in its attention to the needs of children and in the "fairness doctrine," which required attention to public issues and an opportunity to speak for diverse views.

It would be a big stretch to say that his attack on Hollywood qualifies Senator Dole as a Madisonian. But his speech has a clear and (so far as I can tell) unnoticed antecedent from an unmistakable Madisonian, and a liberal one to boot: the famous speech in 1961 by Newton Minow, President Kennedy's chairman of the FCC, in which he described television as a "vast wasteland." In attacking the mass media for its violence, its banality and its failure to educate, Minow was celebrated by many liberals, partly because he spoke in Madisonian terms. He urged that the speech market be evaluated on aspirational grounds. Does it really communicate ideas? Does it deal with serious issues in a serious way? Does it inform? Does it provide education for children?

Minow said that all these questions should be answered "no," and he urged that the "no" answers suggested a big problem, whether or not industry was responding to market forces. "The power of instantaneous sight and sound is without precedent in mankind's history. This is an awesome power.... And it carries with it awesome responsibities.... Ask not what broadcasting can do for you—ask what you can do for broadcasting." In his new book, written with Craig LaMay, Minow elaborates the position outlined in his "vast wasteland" speech, with particular reference to the needs of children.

The book is short and its argument is simple. From the inception of commercial television, members of the broadcasting industry have been seen not as ordinary businesses, but as trustees for the public interest. Usually broadcasters acknowledged their public responsibilities. Early commercial broadcasting included self-conscious "public-service visionaries," producing such programs as "American School in the Air" and "The University of Chicago Roundtable" (my personal favorite). In 1930, William Paley, the chairman of CBS, promised a Senate committee that no more than 30 percent of his network's programming would ever be sold, and that the balance would be used for unsponsored educational and noncommercial programs. Two decades later

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pat Weaver, the president of NBC, depicted a bold future in which television, by carrying out its public duties, could "create a new stature in our citizens."

According to Minow and LaMay, it was only in the 1950s that commercial greed began to take over and aspirational goals began to dim. Hence Minow's famous and far from dated speech (reprinted as an appendix here), in which he said to the National Association of Broadcasters:

> I invite you to sit down in front of your television set.... I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland. You will see a procession of game shows, violence, audience-participation shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families, blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, western bad men, western good men, private eyes, gangsters, more violence and cartoons. And, endlessly, commercials—many screaming, cajoling and offending.... Is there one person in this room who claims that broadcasting can't do better?

The speech got a lot of attention, but it didn't much affect commercial practices. From 1961 to the present, the profit motive produced the same kind of programming, with less in the way of westerns and more in the way of talk shows featuring very strange people.

For Minow and LaMay, a main culprit of the whole story is the FCC of the 1980s, which engaged in rapid deregulation, producing an explosion of market-driven programming, especially for children. Thus it happened that many shows for children turned out to be based on products. (Many such shows were actually full-length commercials.) Minow and LaMay think that this is a grim outcome for adults and children alike. Rejecting marketplace thinking, they insist on a difference between "the public interest" and "what interests the public." They think that the public interest, properly understood, requires educational and high-quality programming as distinguished from prurient violence, sensationalism and sex scandals. Aside from children's broadcasting, they do not call for governmental action, but they do suggest that the original vision of television was not thought to be inconsistent with the First Amendment and that it is much better than the market-driven status quo.

With respect to children, Minow and LaMay claim that there are serious problems calling for creative governmental response. In their view, children do not have enough good programming. Television is a big presence in the lives of preschoolers, who are exploited through highly manipulative advertising. (Thus Fox's enthusiastic claim for prospective advertisers: "We deliver more young viewers than anyone.") Children also see far too much programming that may be bad for them, above all because it is violent. The average American preschooler watches more than twenty-seven hours of television per week, and there are about twenty to twenty-five violent acts per hour in children's programs, leading the average preschooler to see about 600 violent acts per week.

Minow and LaMay say that there is an expert consensus to the effect that exposure to violent programming can have serious consequences. It can produce fear, anxiety, aggressive behavior and even violence. And, by way of remedy, they offer four reforms. All of them are pretty modest in view of their broad indictment of children's programming, but most of them have pretty uncertain prospects in light of current congressional enthusiasm for deregulation (on which more in a moment).

First, they argue that ordinary broadcasters should be required, as a condition of obtaining a license, to provide at least one hour per day of programming to "serve the educational and informational needs of children" 12 and younger. Stations failing to do this must make a contribution consisting of 1.5 percent of gross advertising revenues to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which is to use the sums to produce and distribute programming designed to educate and to inform children. Second, they urge that commercial advertising be banned on programming specifically designed for preschool children. Third, they say that each franchising authority for cable television must establish an "education channel" for preschool children. Funds for the channel would be obtained by 1.5 percent of the franchise fee imposed on the cable system. Fourth, every television should come equipped with "circuitry" designed to permit viewers to block the display of channels, programs and time slots, so that parents would have the power to control the programming that comes into the home. (This idea has caught the attention of Congress and was recently endorsed by President Clinton.)

Here, then, is Minow and LaMay's argument in a nutshell: a description and defense of the "public interest" ideal; a set of claims about the effects of television on children; and a set of proposals for reform. Their argument raises many questions. Let us begin with the Constitution, and then discuss matters of policy.

The book's proposals don't raise the most fundamental issues about marketplaces and Madison. They have the virtue of showing that some initiatives, by facilitating individual choice, would be pretty much compatible with both conceptions. But the proposals do raise some nice First Amendment questions. The "circuitry" requirement is probably the easiest, at least if it is cheap to install. Its effect is merely to facilitate control over the television set. The neutrality of the requirement is crucial: courts wouldn't hesitate to strike down a provision that specifically allowed people to screen out speech with politically disapproved content—say, the Democratic Convention, or Rush Limbaugh, or speech critical of the government. Minow and LaMay rightly urge a content-neutral approach to the principle of parental control: trickier issues would be raised if government specified that the circuitry should be designed to screen out violence or sex.

From the constitutional point of view, the "education channel" idea is intriguing. Franchising authorities may not be speakers, but the requirement is clearly based on the content of speech, and it's troubling if the government mandates that channels contain governmentally preferred content. The Supreme Court would not permit a law requiring a "Democratic Party" channel, or a "Traditional Values" channel, or a "Feminism" channel or a "National Defense" channel. For Madisonians and marketeers alike, laws that favor a particular point of view are almost automatically invalid. And laws that favor speech of a certain content are also troublesome if they appear to be based on favoritism of a certain viewpoint.

Even if it is neutral with respect to point of view, regulation of content should be disfavored. Imagine a government-required science fiction or classical music channel, either of which would raise serious constitutional problems. In this light, it would certainly be possible to challenge the "education channel" on First Amendment grounds. But the Court has said that government has a good deal of power to protect the special needs of children, that it can promote programming that helps children and discourage (within imprecisely defined limits) programming that harms them. So long as government is not prescribing a viewpoint, the proposal for an education channel seems acceptable from the constitutional point of view.

On broadly similar grounds, the ban on commercial advertising aimed primarily at preschoolers would probably be upheld. The government already bans tobacco advertising on television, and the ban is widely regarded as legitimate, partly because advertising is far from the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Madisonian core of the First Amendment. It would be a less intrusive and thus acceptable step to ban commercials for children under the age of 6. Note, however, that the ban is quite vague and that this step may be counterproductive from the standpoint of policy: a ban on advertising is a good way to discourage the programming in the first place.

Now consider the requirement that every broadcaster either provide a "substantial amount" of educational programming for children or pay a certain sum to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Here the target of regulation is not just franchisers, and here there will be some foreclosure of choices of both children and adults, many of whom might well prefer, at the relevant time, to see something other than what government mandates. But this provision should probably be upheld as well. It does have a degree of flexibility with the "buy out" option. It would not apply to cable stations. It doesn't forbid or require any particular viewpoint. It is notable in this regard that many other countries do something of this general sort, with Australia abandoning market forces in favor of a nonprofit foundation producing children's programming, the BBC offering about 840 hours of children's programs per year, Sweden giving about 12 percent of broadcast time to children and Japan using television to supplement classrooms, with large public investments in children's programming.

So much for constitutionality. Now let us turn to policy. Minow and LaMay's argument raises many troublesome issues from the pragmatic point of view. Some of the key terms are pretty vague: "education," "specifically designed for" preschool children, "educational and informational needs of children." As the authors recognize, similar terms in the pitifully ineffective Children's Television Act of 1990 produced an evasive and weird response from broadcasters, who claimed that 1950s cartoons could qualify as "educational." Moreover, the funding and the administration of the "education channel" are left murky. Why shouldn't taxpayers have to pay for any such channel, or for any education hour on the networks? This question isn't squarely addressed. Deregulation can be a good thing insofar as it expands the range of options. And perhaps one hour of mandatory children's programming per day is too much.

But these are matters of detail. There are more basic questions involving the responsibilities of parents, especially in a period of rapidly changing technology; the value of private choice; and existing evidence about the effects of the media on children and culture.

Parents first. Of critics of the mass media, including Minow and Dole, it is often asked: Isn't it the job of parents, rather than the job of government, to control what children see? With so many outlets, can't parents ensure that children see whatever the family wants? Minow and LaMay don't entirely answer these questions. Basic responsibility for children, of course, does lie with families, not with the FCC. And with dozens of stations, parents may be able to find good programming for their children. Naturally parents should monitor children's choices, and (as everyone emphasizes) families should watch television together.

And yet it does not follow that government has no legitimate role in encouraging better programming and in offering modest regulatory initiatives. The amazing proliferation of stations is an incomplete answer. (Even now only about 60 percent of Americans have cable and, outside of PBS, good programming for children is rare.) Some parents simply will not control what their children watch, and children shouldn't be harmed because of the negligence of their parents. In any case, let's be realistic. Parents cannot always control what their children watch even if they try. In fact, it is often children who are most vulnerable to bad television, and least likely to see good television, whose parents are least likely to help. If government can help promote parental control or otherwise help children, it should do so. Surely government can take steps to make it easier for parents to do what they ought to do, and that is the purpose of the "circuitry" requirement. To the extent that Minow and LaMay are trying moral suasion, and speaking of modest regulation, their argument is not weakened by the possibility of parental control.

What about private choice? Minow and LaMay reject the marketplace model, which uses the idea of "choice" as its foundation; and insofar as the Madisonian ideal prizes education and political deliberation, it seems to deny the importance of choice. Many people, after all, don't like political deliberation, or even hate it, and would prefer to relax with situation comedies or talk shows. Can't people who don't like certain programming just turn the channel? In an area of nearly limitless options, why should government have any regulatory role? Isn't the "public interest" idea anachronistic, illiberal and unacceptably paternalistic?

Minow and LaMay do not offer full answers to these questions, which have gotten renewed attention in recent debates over rap music and Hollywood. But the idea of "choice"—or consumer sovereignty, in the economists' phrase—has many problems in the context of programming for children. Children are not permitted to do as they "choose," because the whole notion of "choice" requires certain preconditions, including a certain degree of maturity. Insofar as children are the subject of discussion, Minow and LaMay are on firm ground.

But there is another, more fundamental problem with the rhetoric of choice. The particular choices that people make in the market domain should not be identified with the general idea of "choice" itself. People's choices are a function of the role in which they find themselves. They make choices as consumers; they also make choices as citizens. In their capacity as citizens, they may attempt to support aspirational or altruistic goals that depart from their choices as consumers. Thus people may support anti-discrimination laws even though they are far from race- or sex-neutral; they may urge environmental protection even if they do not, in their market behavior, do anything for the environment; and they may want to provide good programming even though their own consumption choices lead to dumb situation comedies. If, in the

Poorer as animals talk

In the alley a rat tried to assemble a pig.
Weeds licked the rat. In hair grown all down
and healing the rat licked the pig. Fireflies
drew lines through wet grass, in a revision.
The rat said I would feel freer on the whole
with a larger pig. Here the white cat prowls
inventive. Needles rest in the bitter smell
of grass decomposed, and patterned in rain.

The rat opened the meadow. The meadow ran.
Cornflowers made their stars. The black meadow
knew itself, and cornflowers rose over and again.
Weeds threaded over and through it in a pattern
of ability and thread. Blue and white stars
helped. And blood and the blood of the meadow
ran open through automats and clearing skies.
When the rat came with a sickle and mowed.

DAVID MICAH GREENBERG

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

democratic arena, people favor—or "choose"—measures to ensure better programming for children, there should be no objection from the standpoint of choice. At least this is true if the regulation does not favor a particular point of view and if it does not much limit the range of options.

The Madisonian view of free speech throws enthusiasm for market choices into question. (Recall Brandeis's suggestions that political discussion is a duty and that the greatest menace to liberty is an inert people.) And citizens in a democracy recognize that existing "choices" do not fall from the sky, that our choices and preferences can be shaped by social forces, including the mass media. Perhaps our choices are being affected in an unfortunate way. If this is so, complaints by private citizens and public officials are perfectly appropriate. They are an important and legitimate part of public debate.

What about the actual evidence? Do the mass media affect behavior? Does television hurt children? No simple answers would make sense. As Minow and LaMay acknowledge, it would probably be impossible to demonstrate a clear causal connection between exposure to violent programming and real-world violence and harm. Not because the connection doesn't exist, but because of the limits of social science. Laboratory experiments show that exposure to violent programming increases both fear and aggression; but these results may not map onto actual behavior. If we turn to the evidence of the real world, and try to draw correlations by looking at different periods and different nations, we will run up against a serious obstacle, which is that it is very hard to control for other variables. If America is more violent than Japan, and American children see more violent television than Japanese children, it hardly follows that television violence is responsible for violence in America. Minow and LaMay say a lot about high rates of violence in American life, but they cannot attribute these high rates to the mass media.

Still, it isn't necessary to demand proof of causation before encouraging greater responsibility on simple prudential grounds. (People spend a lot of money to buy insurance.) Acknowledging the limits of the evidence, many official and unofficial bodies—including the surgeon general, the National Institute for Mental Health, the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association—have found a link between exposure to media violence and aggressive behavior. That is reason enough for concern. And real-world violence is not the only problem: parents and even governments are entitled to be troubled if children are taking pleasure from the observation of violent acts, which is a bad thing in itself.

Minow and LaMay insist that media violence is a problem, but for the most part they do not urge regulatory solutions, and on both counts they are probably on the right track. Any aggressive regulatory response would be likely to be far too crude, sweeping up materials that government should not control. In fact, the authors' own proposals, even if modest, are unlikely to get serious attention in Washington, now or soon. The circuitry requirement, which is receiving much attention in the capital, is an exception; but this and other modest initiatives are about as far as lawmakers will now go.

In such a climate, this book might be seen mostly as a plea to broadcasters to try to do better and, perhaps, a request to Congress not to eliminate PBS. (It is one of the most troubling inconsistencies of some conservatives that they attack commercial media for responding to market pressures and then try to destroy public television. Perhaps they simply want to protect conventional morality, a goal that is quite foreign to Madisonians.) Taken in this way, Minow and LaMay's book deserves a lot of attention. We should distinguish, much more often than we do, between moral exhortations and calls for regulation. In the 1960s, many liberals, arguing on behalf of individual rights, pressed hard on the distinction between what people have a right to do and what it is right to do. Liberals said that people often have a right to do things that it is not right to do, but it is equally important to emphasize a neglected corollary: that people are sometimes wrong to do what they have a right to do.

This is part of Minow and LaMay's project, and it links them with many other critics of the mass media, not excluding Senator Dole. Consider in this connection the reflexive use of the word "censorship" when the media is under attack. Minow and LaMay offer many examples, which are simultaneously depressing and hilarious. A Time-Warner executive complained that a rap singer's right of free speech was endangered by the expression of public disgust at his song about killing the police; "NBC Nightly News" responded to criticism of its showing an on-camera murder of a Miami woman with the correct but irrelevant statement that the broadcast was protected by the First Amendment; and countless people cried censorship in response to the criticisms of the entertainment industry by William Bennett and Robert Dole, neither of whom urged government regulation.

Members of the mass media should not confuse the question of what the law allows them to do with the question of what they ought to do. They should not invoke the word "censorship" to stop people from discussing their performance. There is a parallel in the environmental arena, where a truly dazzling number of companies have taken creative steps to reduce environmental harm, even at the expense of profits and even if they had a "right" to continue to pollute. In reaction to public pressure to reduce environmental degradation, it would be hopelessly unresponsive for companies to assert their "rights," even when there is uncertain empirical evidence linking pollution to real harm. Members of the mass media are in a roughly similar position. They should do a lot better, especially when it comes to children.

Which brings us back to Senator Dole. His attack on Hollywood was no mere rerun of Minow's "vast wasteland" speech. Unlike Minow, Dole is not a supporter of public broadcasting, which provides the best programming for children. Unlike Minow, Dole was highly partisan, speaking for political advantage and offering no criticism of violent movies starring prominent Republicans such as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bruce Willis. And yet there is an unmistakable overlap between Dole's Hollywood speech and Minow's book, and there is an unmistakable overlap, too, between Dole's speech and concerns expressed not only by Minow, but also by Bill Clinton, Bill Bradley, Paul Simon

DO YOU HAVE A BOOK TO PUBLISH?
The Pentland Press, Inc.
USA • ENGLAND • SCOTLAND
We specialize in co-operative publishing and can arrange the complete publication, promotion and warehousing of your book on a fee basis.
Please telephone: 1-800-948-2786

Hate To Shave?
Try the elimination of razor irritation
ABOUT-FACE™ is the world's first dual-control shave cream. In just one shave, ABOUT-FACE™ ends nicks, scrapes and razor burn. Used again after shaving, it soothes and protects your face all day. One product, two great performances. ABOUT-FACE™ delivers the smoothest, most comfortable shave you've ever had, or your money back.
THE COSMETIC CENTER: Atlanta, Baltimore, Charlotte, Chicago, Philadelphia, Raleigh, Richmond, D.C.
Telephone Order: 1-800-638-8700

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and many others. Minow and LaMay have done a real service by identifying the limits of free markets in free speech, by recalling Madisonian aspirations and by showing (as the campaign of 1996 begins) that concerns about the effects of the mass media on children are not limited, and should not be limited, to the far right.

CASS R. SUNSTEIN teaches at the University of Chicago and is the author of *Democracy and the Problem of Free Speech* (The Free Press).

I Am Not Heathcliff

BY DENIS DONOGHUE

Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture by Terry Eagleton

(Verso, 355 pp., $27.95)

"The British don't believe Ireland is real; they just drop their fantasies here." In a wild romance called *Saints and Scholars*, which appeared in 1987, Terry Eagleton ascribed that assertion to James Connolly, one of the leaders of the Easter Rising, 1916. It is also the main idea of Eagleton's new book.

In his very professorial novel, Eagleton developed the conceit that Connolly, Commandant-General of the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, was not executed on May 12, 1916 for his part in the Easter Rising. Instead, he escaped from Dublin and lit out for Connemara. There he took refuge in a cottage which happened to be occupied by the philosopher Wittgenstein and his friend Nikolai Bakhtin, brother of the literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin. Waiting for reinforcements, Connolly diverted himself from the pain of a gunshot wound by engaging these foreign gentlemen in high discussion of war, symbolism, language, martyrdom and the rhetorical success of failure.

Bakhtin, sodden with drink, says of the soldiers killing one another in France: "If there are bodies in torment there are bodies in ecstasy." Wittgenstein, having remarkably little to say for himself, quotes Walter Benjamin without acknowledgement to the effect that there is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism. More succinctly: "For every cathedral a pit of bones: for every masterpiece, misery." Ireland being Ireland, reinforcements fail to arrive, but a man named Leopold Bloom turns up, freed of his domestic duties in Dublin by the elopement of his wife, Molly, with an aspiring writer named Stephen Dedalus. When a squad of British soldiers descends on the cottage to arrest Connolly, Bloom exhibits his love of humanity by shooting one of them, Chapman by name, in the back. Natives and émigrés are then conveyed to Galway by car. Wittgenstein passes the motoring time, which would have passed anyway, by admonishing himself with some well-chosen sentences deflected from Samuel Beckett: "You must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on." What more is there to say in a country, as Eagleton describes it, driven mad with alien fantasy?

Some passages from *Saints and Scholars*, and also from Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, turn up again in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*, but the context of their appearance is now a more sober discourse. Eagleton has gathered into his new book a number of his essays on Irish literature and society from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century: roughly, from Swift to Yeats and Joyce. His main themes are: why the Anglo-Irish or Protestant Ascendancy failed to achieve hegemony and settled for the rough stuff of coercion; the moral philosophy of Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746); the relations, such as they have been, between Britain and Ireland; Anglo-Irish fiction; culture and politics from Davis to Joyce; nationalism; and Ireland since the Famine.

But the main point of the book is to claim that James Connolly, a true socialist, knew what the British have been up to all these centuries in Ireland: not grabbing land, guarding their western flank, or making more Empire, but discarding their fantasies. This notion is developed in the book's title and in its first essay. In the fourth chapter of *Wuthering Heights*, old Earnshaw sets off to walk from the Heights to Liverpool. On his return a few days later, he brings back a foundling he has come upon in the city, "a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk ... yet, when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand." The child is soon called Heathcliff. Eagleton plays with the fancy—it is no more than that, and the chronology is a poor fit, as he acknowledges—that Heathcliff is the abandoned child of an Irish emigrant family, a ferocious waif of Nature who talks the gibberish of the Irish language and grows up to be a nuisance in the Heights and a menace to Thrushcross Grange.

> Heathcliff is a force of Nature which the civil society of the Grange can't accommodate and so must try to destroy. For Eagleton, he becomes an emblem of Ireland, the vehicle and the victim of England's bad dreams:
>
> Ireland, in this as in other ways, then comes to figure as the monstrous unconscious of the metropolitan society, the secret materialist history of endemically idealist England. It incarnates, for Carlyle, Froude and others, the Tennysonian nightmare of a Nature red in tooth and claw, obdurately resistant to refinement. When the child Heathcliff trespasses on the Grange, the neurasthenically cultivated Lintons set the dogs on him, forced for a moment to expose the veiled violence which helps to prop them up.

I think I know what "materialist" and "idealist" are doing in that remarkably polemical first sentence. Let us suppose that England dumps its fantasies on Ireland so that it can proceed unburdened on its empiricist, imperial way. Eagleton thinks, presumably, that British culture is idealist to the extent that it validates its practices by submitting them to the rule of consciousness. And whatever it cannot convert to consciousness must be nasty matter, to be disposed of in waste ground. Such matter, like the force attributed to the witches in *Macbeth*, cannot be contained within the official rhetoric of British culture. Ireland and *Wuthering Heights*, Eagleton says, are therefore names for the "sickening precariousness" of that formation.

Heathcliff is "a fragment of the Famine," and the later chapters of *Wuthering Heights* show what happened to the survivors of the Great Hunger of 1845-1851:

> Heathcliff... is a notoriously split subject: if he goes through the motions of undermining the ruling order from within, his soul remains arrested and fixated in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imaginary relation with Catherine. Indeed he engages in the former kind of activity precisely to avenge himself for the unavailability of the latter. Heathcliff starts out as an image of the famished Irish immigrant, becomes a landless laborer set to work in the Heights, and ends up as a symbol of the constitutional nationalism of the Irish parliamentary party.

No writer is on oath in driving a conceit, but Eagleton should have let this one rest long before coming to the Irish Parliamentary Party. He has evidently forgotten that the Party, torn by the defeat of Parnell, was brushed aside by a new generation of nationalists, and that the new forms of energy culminated, by intent or not, in the Easter Rising and the founding of the Irish Free State. And a good thing, too, in my opinion.

As an allegory of the relation between Ireland and England, the story of Heathcliff and Catherine is interesting to begin with, but daft in the end. Heathcliff is real to himself, but it is the gist of Eagleton's argument that modern Ireland is not real to itself because England, needing Ireland as a place of fantasy, hasn't allowed it to be real. Ireland is fixated, therefore, in an imaginary relation with England: *this* is the source of all our woes and follies. Pursuing this chimera, Eagleton has sustained himself on Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious.* He interprets Jameson's book rather freely, in these terms:

> To grasp the notion of a political unconscious, one would need to imagine that our everyday social practices and relations, with all their implicit violence, longing and anxiety, were all the time weaving a kind of fantastic subtext to themselves in some entirely imaginary place, a kind of invisible verso to the recto of our waking life, as intimate and alien to it as id to ego, in which those familiar social processes are refigured in the light of all that they have abruptly repressed, and so as monstrously distorted images through which the shape of everyday political society is nonetheless dimly discernible.

Not the liveliest of Eagleton's sentences, but the argument is clear enough. Like Jameson, Eagleton thinks he knows what reality is, and also that he can separate it cleanly from fantasy. As a positivist and a Marxist, he defines reality as "our everyday social practices and relations." These do not include myths, religious beliefs and practices, or those acts of imagination which are not socially embedded. Eagleton calls such acts fantasies and throws them into Jameson's trash can. Jameson's argument, too, depends upon an arbitrary distinction between socially authenticated motives and the rest; and this notion is never far from Eagleton's thoughts. He reverts to it when his argument is otherwise idling, or (with more hope of success) when he tries to explain a number of Irish fictions which are commonly known as Protestant Gothic, including Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* (1864) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). They are romances of ruined families, suicides, vampires, decayed houses, graveyards, tales from beyond the tomb. "Protestant Gothic," as Eagleton says, "might be dubbed the political unconscious of Anglo-Irish society, the place where its fears and fantasies most definitively emerge."

Eagleton's understanding of Ireland is a familiar one. Everybody agrees that Ireland is a rural, pre-industrial society that has developed quite differently from Britain. Having little or no natural resources, Ireland has been unable to move into heavy industry. It has not had an Industrial Revolution, apart from a small area surrounding Belfast and the Lagan Valley. As a direct result, according to Eagleton, "Ireland was in general a profoundly conservative society, with only a weak ideology of modernization."

It is a further consequence that Ireland "lacks a mainstream liberal tradition." Liberalism has not flourished there, apparently, because the few cities and large towns in Ireland failed to produce a strong middle class when such a thing was needed and might have worked for a progressive cause. In the eighteenth century, Ireland's Catholic peasants were governed—no, dominated—by a junta of Protestant burghers and landlords who eventually called themselves the Ascendancy. When it appeared, at the end of the century, that Catholics would have to be allowed to vote, their masters banded together in the Protestant interest. A few members of the Ascendancy were decent enough fellows, no doubt, but most of their colleagues were louts on horseback. Edmund Burke denounced the Protestant Ascendancy, in his *Letter to Richard Burke* and *Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe,* both written in 1792, as a group determined "to keep a dominion over the rest by reducing them to absolute slavery under a military power."

That pleasure didn't end in 1800 when Pitt, the British Prime Minister, bribed the Ascendancy to abolish the short-lived Irish Parliament—Grattan's Parliament, 1782-1800—and enter upon a so-called Union of Great Britain and Ireland. No one could have predicted that British governments in the nineteenth century would gradually undermine the Ascendancy that enforced British interests in Ireland. British administrations started giving some measure of justice to the peasants.

Reluctantly, indeed. When a fungus struck the potato crop in August 1845, the government of Sir Robert Peel did the poor best it could to forestall starvation, but Lord John Russell, Peel's successor, soon gave up the effort as a bad job. Besides, there were influential people in Westminster who thought the Famine a benign act of God to reduce the crazy, fast-breeding Irish to a manageable number. After the Famine, the chastened survivors might be drawn into the secular decorum of Britain. In the later years of the nineteenth century the Ascendancy began to lose its power, not because its members saw the injustice of coercing the Catholics, but because the big landlords and burghers were too feeble to hold on to the dominion they enjoyed. It took many years of famine, emigration, broken promises, and the gradual transfer of land from landlord to tenant, however, before the Ascendancy became the merely picturesque remnant that it is now. A wise mind could have written the script of that decline in advance. The rest is contemporary history.

Eagleton's first concern is the relation, as he divines it, between these social and political conditions and the literature that arose from them. He is a Marxist, and so he thinks of modern literature mainly as the novel, which rather straitens his view of Irish literature. And, as a Marxist, he assumes that the vocation of fiction is to be realistic. He also seems to agree with V.S. Pritchett that the English tradition of fiction "is hard-headed, moralistic, and sociable, vegetating in good sense and a general experience of the world." The realistic novel is possible, according to Eagleton, only when the society to which it refers is settled and relations among the social classes can be understood within a vision of society as a whole. He concedes that realism is often found in collusion with powerful men, but at least it intuits a structure of worldly relations complete enough to constitute a culture.

No such felicity has obtained in Ireland. "Culture demands a material base," Eagleton says, "and a society as impoverished as Ireland was hardly in a position to provide one." As a result, Irish literature features "a gap between consciousness and action," a discrepancy "between rhetoric and reality," "a hiatus between the experience it has to record and the conventions available for articulating it." Realism "aspires to a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unity of subject and object, of the psychological and the social, but these in Ireland tend to split into separate genres." Eagleton takes from Benjamin a reference to the "sickness of tradition," a condition in which "truth and wisdom have decayed but the forms of their transmissibility are preserved." Surprisingly, Eagleton finds this sickness in Joyce's *Dubliners*, "a work which preserves the forms of storytelling but empties them remorselessly of their content." More pervasively in Irish fiction, according to Eagleton, it is a mark of this disjunction that the language used lives at a remove from the world to which it ostensibly refers. Such language brings things into existence, or into a fantasy of existence; it doesn't find stability by referring to a world that it claims already to know and to understand. Hence the desperate eloquence of Irish writing.

This reading of Irish fiction is not entirely new. We find the gist of it in several studies which suppose that the artistic forms used by a client nation imitate those of its master. As in W.J. McCormack's *Ascendancy and Tradition* (1985), which speaks of Irish fiction in the Benjaminian terms of discrepancy and allegory:

> The priority of meaning over experience for Irish writing is one way of observing a tendency towards allegory in certain large areas of nineteenth-century fiction. The same proposition might be stated conversely as the tendency towards abstract experience in this colonial fiction, a tendency we shall trace in some work by Maria Edgeworth, Sheridan Le Fanu, and Charles Lever.

Eagleton's book examines this discrepancy, if that is what it must be called, over a wide range of Irish fiction. Nearly every modern novelist of any significance is brought under the sway of Eagleton's dominant idea: Edgeworth, Lady Morgan, Maturin, Le Fanu, John and Michael Banim, Gerald Griffin, William Carleton, Lever, Somerville and Ross, Stoker, George Moore and James Stephens. Moore is particularly interesting to Eagleton, since he was an absentee landlord with his eye on London and Paris. He was in Paris when he learned that his tenants in the West of Ireland were striking for a reduction of their rents. The only thing to do was to settle in London and live by his pen; but he kept up an aesthetic relation to an Ireland already being "performed," in Yeats's aesthetic terms. Eagleton's pages on Moore are provocative, but he should have given him credit as one of Joyce's precursors in the short story. There is also a long essay on Wilde as thinker, but Wilde without the plays is not of much interest. Eagleton's references to Shaw, Joyce and Yeats are perfunctory, a serious limitation in the study of Irish literature; but by then the book is coming to an end.

The most arguable part of the book depends on Eagleton's assumptions about realism and the novel. I don't understand why he ignores the fact, which Northrop Frye clarified many years ago, that there are at least four forms of prose fiction. Frye called them novel, romance, confession and anatomy. Each of these is animated by a different sense of life and a corresponding relation to language. *Wuthering Heights*, as a case in point, is a romance, not a novel. Frye wrote of it:

> The conventions of *Wuthering Heights* are linked rather with the tale and the ballad. They seem to have more affinity with tragedy, and the tragic emotions of passion and fury, which would shatter the balance of tone in Jane Austen, can be safely accommodated here.

English fiction, which includes Jane Austen and George Eliot among its novelists, has Emily Brontë, Scott, and Morris among its romancers. Unwilling to treat the four forms of fiction on equal terms and to cope with their different epistemological and social axioms, Eagleton is forced to keep asking the same question: why does Irish fiction in the nineteenth century feature an equivocal relation to the realism dominant in England and France? He doesn't consider the possibility that Irish fictions might be fulfilling other observances of genre, like the fictions of Swift, Peacock, Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville, which give little credence to realism.

Not that Eagleton blames Irish writers for failing to write *Pride and Prejudice*:

> That the Anglo-Irish novel is only ambiguously realist is no more a failure on its part than the fact that Jacobean tragedy is not Arnold Bennett. A literary tradition which includes such largely non-realist works as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*, Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas*, Stoker's *Dracula*, and Joyce's *Ulysses* need not be rebuked for lapsing from some Platonic norm of mimesis. On the contrary, it is in its refusal to conform to that paradigm, or its apparent unconsciousness of it, that much of its fascination lies.

But suppose it were not a matter of refusal or of unconsciousness. Suppose it were a matter of choice. Then a different set of questions would arise. Eagleton can't get out of the fixation of thinking that, because Ireland was and still partly is a colony of Britain, its writers live in the predicament of every subaltern literature and are doomed to be victims. He never considers the possibility that Irish writers write as they do because they choose to employ diverse forms of fiction rather than because they are reacting to a realist norm prescribed for them by Britain. Eagleton presents even the most powerful of Irish writers, Swift, Yeats and Joyce, as victims, determined by the colonial mess in which they found themselves entangled.

His comments on Swift are acute, up to the point of their reference to *Gulliver's Travels*:

> Swift reviles the British for reducing the Irish to slaves, then condemns the Irish for internalizing this slavery, which is at once more and less reason for excoriating the British, and excellent reason for loathing oneself. The Gulliver who is caught on the hop between conflicting cultural norms, whose whole existence is a barely tolerable in-betweenness, is then an appropriate figure for an Ascendancy which was both colonized and colonialist.

This is lively stuff, but it denotes a bizarre reading of *Gulliver's Travels*, a book that seems to me to have far more to do with Hobbes and Locke than with the Ascendancy.

Even Yeats is construed as a writer desperately writing himself out of a predicament enforced by Britain:

> Yeats fashions his images and then claims to have stumbled across them in the immanent structure of the real. He is forever conjuring from the world with one hand what he has just slipped into it with the other, to the point where in "The Fisherman" he can address an entire poem to one of his own images, treating the mind-created as an autonomous object. The faith that reality is a construct of the mind, which allows a sinking Ascendancy to assert a last edge over a history which flouts them, is not entirely at one with the equally ideological enterprise of giving authority to your myths by projecting them into the world. It is the difference between subjective and objective idealism, and Yeats draws on either epistemological strategy as it suits him.

Yeats's fisherman is not an autonomous object. He is a type of person, persuasively drawn into place and time by Yeats's references to "grey Connemara cloth," local landscape and the accoutrements of rod and line. Yeats does not suppose, in this poem, that reality is a construct of the mind. On the larger issue, it is quite wrong to think that Yeats identified himself so completely with the Ascendancy that its decline and fall compelled his styles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And Joyce, too, is presented as a victim of British culture:

> The wealth of his language is an implicit satire of the seedy world it records; but it also graces and dignifies that world, in democratic defiance of the Coole Park idealism which would belittle it. Joyce thus buys his opposition to that idealism at the price of a naturalism which implies that no radical change is really possible, that everything is a recycled, intertextual version of something else, and so undercuts Yeatsian apocalypse and the fantasies of the radical right at the risk of a serene celebration of the given or a mild Bloomian reformism. The limits of his textual politics are thus the limits of a naturalistic aesthetics.

Really? When I read *The Dead*, the trip to Cork and the Christmas dinner scenes in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and the scene of Paddy Dignam's funeral in *Ulysses*, I find it hard to worry about the limits of Joyce's textual politics.

I am becoming quarrelsome, as if Eagleton's book were only an application of standard Marxism to Irish fiction. Every now and again Eagleton breaks out in a rash of such tendentiousness, but more often in this book he takes his Marxism lightly. There are the usual quotations from Gramsci, Benjamin and Raymond Williams, but Eagleton isn't singing the same old song. This is not altogether surprising. It would be hard to bring a strict Marxist analysis to bear on Irish culture, a formation in most respects archaic, deliberately unmodern, rural at heart as well as on principle. No mines, no factories, no proletariat to which a revolutionary role could plausibly be assigned.

If Benjamin is right in saying that history is always recited in favor of the people who have won and that there has never been a history of the defeated, the winners in the long run of Irish history are the latecomers, middle-class Catholics who aspired to jobs in an Irish Civil Service and Irish professions. No wonder Marxism has always been a bit of a sport in Ireland. The working man's hero Jim Larkin had his day in the Dublin strike of 1913, but when that ended the initiative passed to Padraic Pearse, Catholic teacher and poet, not to Eagleton's beloved socialist Connolly. The Easter Rising was a Catholic, middle-class affair. Pearse, according to Yeats, summoned the mythical Cuchulain to his side in the General Post Office. Maybe he did; but he also saw himself on a cross beside Christ.

For a secular Englishman of positivist bias, Eagleton is remarkably well-disposed to Ireland. He thinks the Irish Free State turned out to be a poor, conservative thing, but he speaks warmly of the nationalism that brought it about. Nationalism, he says with still another glance at Benjamin, "is a politics of the aura in an age of mechanical reproduction." Eagleton's sympathetic commentary on Ireland and on Irish nationalism is, to begin with, a family sentiment. His grandparents emigrated from Ireland to Britain and his mother was born in the Irish community of Bacup, a small mill-town in Lancashire. But his attitude to modern Ireland is also explained by his contempt for the Protestant Ascendancy and the successive British governments its members claimed to support. He notes that "Irish nationalism has been on the whole more remarkable for its ecumenism than its sectarian zeal:"

> From Tone's "common name of Irishman" to early Sinn Fein's Davisite notion of a comprehensive nation, most nationalist trends, including the Irish Republican Brotherhood, were at pains to rally to their banners the non-Catholic and non-Gael, however notionally or perfunctorily... Padraic Pearse saw fit to rebuke the Ancient Order of Hibernians for excluding Protestants from their ranks.

It is good to have this on record.

Heathcliff and the Great Hunger is in the nationalist tradition of Irish writing. It indicts Britain for centuries of neglect, condescension, and folly. Nothing new in that: we have been hearing such charges since John Mitchel's *History of Ireland* appeared in 1869. But Eagleton's book raises these issues at an awkward time, when many commentators on Irish history and culture are settling for a spiritless form of revisionism. It is understandable that, after twenty-seven years of violence in Northern Ireland, many historians wish to be released from the whole story of Irish nationalism, Fenianism, Catholic-and-Protestant, and drums under the window. But it is a vain endeavor. I wish the present "peace process" every success, but in the meantime I continue to think that the partition of Ireland was wretched in principle and abominable in its practice. I don't regard the cause of Irish unity as worth a drop of anyone's blood, so I deplore the military and paramilitary actions which have taken place in Northern Ireland. I have little hope of seeing Ireland united in peace, but I dearly wish I might, and I would pray for it if I thought prayer would help.

DENIS DONOGHUE is the author most recently of *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (Knopf).

Rid your home or plant of pests and vermin with the ...

Rodelsonix IX still only $69.95*

**But read this ad for an even better deal!*

•Rodlesonix IX *is an industrial-type unit, the most powerful you can get. It's a humane, clean, and effective system to get rid of your pests—once and for all.*

Mice, rats, roaches, bats, fleas, spiders and other pests make life miserable at home or at the plant. Old-fashioned poisons get rid of them—but only temporarily, and they are a hazard to you and to your pets. *Rodelsonix IX* works on a different principle: It delivers a tremendous blast of ultra-sound—inaudible to you and to your pets—that disrupts the nervous system of those pests. They'll leave your home within a few weeks—never to return. There is nothing to prepare, nothing to set up—no poison and no mess. Pests just disappear.

Rodelsonix IX is a powerful industrial-type unit that protects up to 10,000 sq. ft. (70,000 cu. ft.). It has six variable pitch and "loudness" settings. You can even adjust it to keep larger pests, such as raccoons, pigeons, or rabbits at bay. Since it's clad in an enamel steel housing you can even use it outdoors.

Rodelsonix IX has been designed and engineered to work in restaurants, factories and food processing plants. It's that powerful and that effective. We can still offer this top-of-the-line industrial unit for just $69.95. But here's an even better deal: ***Buy two for just $139.90, and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** Get rid and stay rid of those nasty pests once and for all. Get the best—get *Rodelsonix IX* today!

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER
TOLL FREE (800) 797-7367
24 Hours a Day, 7 days a week.

Please give order Code **#1007G241**. If you prefer, mail check or card authorization and expiration. We need daytime phone # for all orders and issuing bank for charge orders. Add $4.95 standard shipping/insurance charge (plus sales tax for CA delivery). You have 30-day return and one-year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

For Customer Service and for wholesale/premium quantity orders, please call 415-543-6675.

since 1967
haverhills®
185 Berry St. San Francisco, CA 94107

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OXFORD DIARIST

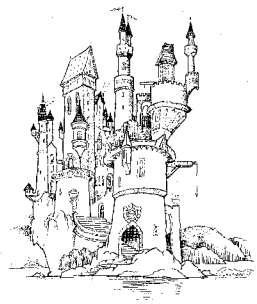
Snob story

ON BROAD STREET, ACROSS FROM Balliol College, stands "The Oxford Story." For several pounds, moving desks whirl visitors through centuries of gothic glory. "An informed and witty insight into the romantic past of the colleges and buildings," summons the glossy brochure. As an afternoon tourist destination, the theme park lives up to its billing. As a forum for graduate study, however, the university often does not. There is an inverse relationship between the awe Americans feel toward Oxford and their degree of exposure to it. Americans of a certain class and affectation see Oxford as the repository of the greatest treasures of Western civilization, an intellectual Disneyland. For those enrolled, it's got half the dynamism of a good American university and twice the rain.

FOR MANY AMERICANS AT OXFORD, particularly Rhodes Scholars, disillusionment is followed by complaint—often two years' worth. As American graduate Rosa Ehrenreich writes in her recent book, *A Garden of Paper Flowers*, "My Oxford was not a very charming place. It was filled with pretension and apathy. It was profoundly anti-intellectual." In the twenty-something magazine *Swing*, Rhodie John Cloud argues that, "Oxford is simply a terrible place to be a young American." The same gripes reappear: Oxford is formal, hierarchical, archaic. The libraries are rarely open, the faculty is inaccessible, the syllabi are outdated. Yet these complaints have a whiff of bad faith about them. Did the Rhodies really come to Oxford looking for twenty-four-hour libraries, trendy blue-jeaned faculty and the latest in feminist theory? If so, there were perhaps 3 trillion American universities they might have selected for graduate study. Does the name Santa Cruz ring any bells? I think they came looking for something else, something that Americans know they can find in England: snobbery.

IT'S A TRADITION THAT STARTED with Cecil Rhodes himself. Theories of imperialism suggest that metropoles use empires for cultural release. Sentiments taboo at home are happily shipped to colonial backwaters, thus sparing domestic society from infection. In Victorian England, one such prohibition was homosexuality. The young Rhodes, faced with this taboo, journeyed to Southern Africa to "get some fresh air." In the virtually all-male world of the South African frontier, he thrived. And he discovered a mineral fortune that he used to fund bursaries at his alma mater.

AT FIRST GLANCE, RHODES'S SOcially emancipated career at the forefront of Britain's African scramble has little in common with the academic meanderings of the young Americans whose résumés bear his name. Yet there is a link. Powerful societies often project their repressed desires onto those weaker than themselves. This impulse provoked Rhodes's journey a century ago, and it helps explain the exaggerated Oxonian prestige that entices hordes of American students to embark upon an academically dubious transatlantic venture today.



WHILE AMERICA IS NOT BRITAIN'S colonial master, it exercises a certain hegemony. And England provides sanctuary for one of America's best-loved taboos: elitism. In a country where populism is sacrosanct and everyone is middle class, Americans pledge fealty to whatever low-brow fashions are in vogue in Peoria. Elites endlessly repent for the sin of being "out of touch." Any political position becomes legitimate if someone can find a poll showing that most Americans endorse it. In such an environment, Americans seek outlets for their pent-up snobbery in various ways. One source of refuge, long favored among liberals, is Supreme Court-worship. At the bench, unelected philosophers are still kings and pore over their footnotes in an environment uninfected by the vulgar populism of radio talk shows and pork-barrel politics.

SUCH HOMEGROWN GOODIES CANnot completely satiate the hunger, however. Even minor trappings of power, wealth or fame are carefully cloaked in the veil of meritocracy. This obsession has reached new heights in the Clinton era, where rags-to-riches stories are virtual prerequisites for appointed office. Today, more than ever, inherited and undeserved status are truly the forbidden delights. For cultural refuge, therefore, Americans look to England. Supermarket shoppers ogle Charles and Diana on the cover of *People*, fascinated by a monarchical fairy tale fundamentally at odds with the American doctrine of achieved rather than hereditary status. And highbrows have their own aristocratic pornography: Oxford.

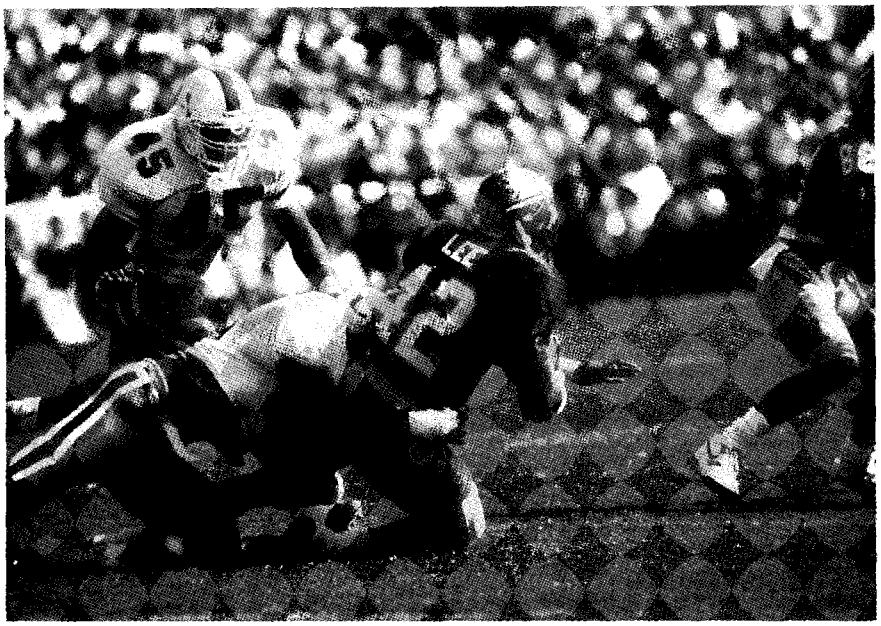
SO THE RHODIES ARE FOLLOWING in imperial footsteps. But, like their turn-of-the-century patron in Matebeleland, they can't admit they're grateful. After all, condemning pornography is one of the best ways of indulging in it. Americans scold Oxford for its backwardness and hierarchy, but it's backwardness and hierarchy they want. Most shun Oxford's modern, American-style graduate colleges. Instead, they flock to the inbred gothic of Christ Church, New College and St. John's. One American I know, surveying his college, and finding it deficient, started a black-tie cigar-smoking society. Students who clawed and sweated their way to the top of elite academic institutions in the U.S. adopt Oxford's patrician ideal: brilliant nonchalance. And nothing sends the hearts aflutter back home like a description of drinking port with sir so-and-so at High Table. A British friend once described watching a punt floating down the Isis River. Its decked-out occupants held wine glasses. The women wore flowery hats. "Classic Oxford," I mused, with the slight class condescension of those who pretend to find the concept alien. She scowled. "I think they were American."

THE LOSERS IN ALL THIS, AS MY friend well understood, are those seeking to transform Oxford from an anachronism into a modern research university. Because the British government has reduced subsidies, they need American money to do so. Several of the colleges are already bankrupt. Ironically, while Americans come to experience Oxford's aristocratic ambiance, that ambiance is fading. Margaret Thatcher and John Major have, by their policies and examples, empowered the nouveaux riches. In education this has meant greater attention to newer universities that stress science and engineering. Many in Oxford, realizing that the decentralized college system is inefficient and structured for humanities teaching rather than lab research, want reform. They might even have thought naïvely, that the American cultural influence would assist in the effort. But the imperial logic runs against them. Today's Rhodies resemble the British anthropologists and administrators who insisted on experiencing remote cultures in their pristine and authentic state. They're looking for a refuge, not a competitor.

PETER BEINART

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Turning Dreams into Realities



The "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program encourages student athletes to take the lessons learned on the football field today and teach children in the classrooms tomorrow.

Encouraging Student Athletes to Become Teachers

During his three years as nose guard on Louisiana State University's football team, John Mawae came to know the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. But nothing moved him more than working with disabled children in a Special Olympics held at LSU. "Seeing those kids realize their dreams against all odds really got to me," Mawae recalls. "I knew then what I wanted to do: help kids like them realize their dreams."

Mawae will get that chance, thanks in part to the "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program created by the College Football Association (CFA) and sponsored by Hitachi, Ltd. Started last academic year, the program awards $335,000 in scholarships at the 67 CFA member universities. At each university, a $5,000 scholarship is awarded to an outstanding senior or graduate student who intends to become a teacher and has participated in the school's football program as a player, trainer, or manager. Mawae, a 1992 scholarship recipient, intends to use his grant to pursue a career teaching kids with special needs.

"Teaching plays an important but undervalued role in society," says Charles M. Neinas, the CFA's executive director. "We'd like to encourage more student athletes to pursue this field, because we think that what they learn on the football field helps to make them effective teachers in the classroom."

Nicole Hagner, a recent University of Pittsburgh graduate, agrees. "Athletics teaches you that it's possible to turn the right dream into a reality through hard work, discipline and teamwork. I'd like to bring that lesson to the classroom," she says. Hagner, who served as a student trainer on Pitt's football team, plans to use her grant to become certified as a high school biology teacher.

Nicole Hagner, University of Pittsburgh graduate and 1992 scholarship recipient.

As college football fans and parents of school-age children, we are proud to be a part of the "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program. We hope that it helps more student athletes like John and Nicole to realize their dreams of becoming teachers.

HITACHI

© 1993 HITACHI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ABSOLUT VODKA PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. 40 AND 50% ALC/VOL (80 AND 100 PROOF). ABSOLUT COUNTRY OF SWEDEN VODKA & LOGO, ABSOLUT BOTTLE DESIGN AND ABSOLUT CALLIGRAPHY ARE TRADEMARKS OWNED BY V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. ©1996 V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. IMPORTED BY THE HOUSE OF SEAGRAM, NEW YORK, NY.
THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED